JUNJI ITO

STORY COLLECTION

SOICHI

JUNJI ITO

STORY COLLECTION

SOICHI

CONTENTS

A Happy Summer Vacation 3
A Happy Winter Vacation 35
Soichi's Happy Diary 67
Soichi's Home Visit 99
Teacher of Cloth 131
Soichi's Birthday 195
Soichi's Petty Curses 227
Four-Layered Room 291
Coffin 331
Rumors 371

A HAPPY SUMMER VACATION

楽しい夏休み

SO AT OUR DAD'S URGING, MY BROTHER AND I WENT TO STAY WITH SOME RELATIVES IN THE COUNTRY.

OUR FAMILY SCRAPPED ITS PLANS FOR A TRIP OVER SUMMER VACATION BECAUSE DAD HAD TO WORK.

WE'RE ONLY DISTANTLY RELATED, SO WE HAVEN'T REALLY HAD MUCH CONTACT. THIS WAS MY FIRST TIME MEETING THESE SECOND COUSINS.

FUKAZAWA!
FUKAZAWA!

YUSUKE AND MICHINA?

THAT'S YOU, ISN'T IT?

OH! IS THAT THEM?

HELLO!

THIS IS MY OLDEST SON, KOICHI. HE'S 15, A YEAR OLDER THAN YOU, YUSUKE.

YOU'RE BOTH SO BIG! HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN? THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU, MICHINA, YOU WERE STILL A BABY.

HELLO!

IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU!

AND THEN THERE'S DAD AND GRANDPA.

GOODNESS! WELL, KOICHI'S OUR OLDEST. THERE'S ALSO SAYURI IN THE MIDDLE, SEVENTH GRADE. OUR YOUNGEST, SOICHI, IS IN FIFTH GRADE.

SO THERE'S SIX OF US AT THE HOUSE.

I JUST TURNED 12. I START JUNIOR HIGH NEXT YEAR.

HOW OLD ARE YOU NOW, MICHINA?

HEY, SAYURI! WE GOT COMPANY!

THAT'S IT RIGHT THERE.

HELLO!

THE SHAVED ICE IS HERE!

HELLO, DELIVERY!

GREAT! THANK YOU.

THANK YOU!

OKAY. STRAW-BERRY FOR MICHINA, AND LEMON FOR YUSUKE.

THEY CAN'T BE. I'M SURE AUNTIE'S GOING TO EAT WITH HIM.

ARE BOTH OF THOSE FOR HIM?

NO... IT'S NOT THAT.

HE'S JUST KIND OF SHY.

IS SOICHI SICK OR SOMETHING?

I BETTER GO BRING SOME TO SOICHI.

WHEE
SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLASH
WHEE
WHEE

REEEEE
REE
REE

SPLASH

EST.
MAY
1965

FUKAZAWA
TOWN
POOL

WHEE
WHEE

WHEE
SPLASH
WHEE

YUSUKEEE!

SPLOSH
SPLOSH

HEY, MICHINA? HOW COME YUSUKE DOESN'T SWIM?

COME SWIM A BIT!

FOR REAL?

HE SINKS LIKE A STONE.

IT'S A SECRET, THOUGH, SAYURI.

NOT A CHANCE!

YOU GUYS ARE SO LUCKY TO HAVE A POOL LIKE THIS BY YOUR HOUSE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU SWIM FOR FREE AT THIS POOL. NOTHING IS FREE IN TOKYO.

W-WHAT THE HECK?!

WAH HA! I HATE THIS JERK! I MEAN, COME ON!

SPLOSH

IS THAT GIRL YOUR COUSIN?

YEAH, SHE'S HERE FROM TOKYO.

HEY, KOICHI!

HM?

HEY, YUSUKE! COME SWIM!

WAH HA!

SPLASH SPLASH SPLASH

WHAT ARE YOU GUYS SO GIDDY ABOUT?

WHAT'S UP?

OH! MUTSU-MI!

HEY! SAYURI!

TMP TMP TMP

YOU *ARE* PRETTY PALE. BUT IF YOU WANT A TAN, YOU CAN GET ONE WHILE YOU SWIM.

NAH, I GOTTA GET A TAN FIRST.

HELLO.

THIS IS HIS LITTLE SISTER.

OH... WELL, WHAT-EVER.

WOW, LUCKY! HE'S HOT! HE LOOKS SO TOKYO. INTRODUCE ME?

OHH, THAT'S MY COUSIN, YUSUKE.

WHO'S THAT GUY? THE ONE SITTING NEXT TO YOUR BROTHER.

NAH. HA HA HA!

CROAK CROAK CROAK

GIRLS LIKE YOU, *HUH*, YUSUKE?

RIBBIT RIBBIT

THAT'S GREAT!

I REALLY AM GLAD WE CAME. I WAS A LITTLE WORRIED, ACTUALLY. I HAD NO IDEA HOW MUCH FUN IT'D BE!

OKAY. HOW ABOUT WE ALL GO THEN?

I'M GOING AGAIN TOMORROW. I WANT TO TRAIN TO SWIM 25 METERS.

HA HA HA! SO YOUNG AND YET SO POLITE!

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

AAH, IT LOOKS AMAZING.

HERE WE GO.

THE WATER-MELON IS NICE AND COLD.

THAT'S FOR SOICHI, RIGHT?

MICHINA AND I CAN TAKE IT. THEN WE CAN SAY HELLO TO HIM, TOO.

OH! AUNTIE?

CITY KIDS'RE SO PROPER!

HA HA HA!

WHY DON'T YOU DO THAT, THEN?

R- RIGHT.

THAT'S HIS ROOM, RIGHT?

HOUSES IN THE COUNTRY ARE BIG, *HUH?*

WAS THE SHAVED ICE YUMMY?

I DO THINK SO.

SO ANYWAY... HONESTLY. YOU THINK SO?

MM-HMM. IT WAS SO GOOD.

I GUESS THEY CAME FROM TOKYO.

WOW. FROM TOKYO?

YUSUKE, HE'S TALKING TO THE DOLLS.

SHH!

THAT'S QUITE THE LONG TRIP.

INDEED, IT IS. THEY MUST BE TIRED.

FWOO

SKREE

WHO'S THERE ?!

TUNK

GRIN

GAH!

NAILS ?

OHH. THOSE ARE NAILS.

FANGS. HE HAD FANGS!

HE'S ALWAYS PUTTING NAILS IN HIS MOUTH.

SO THAT THING THAT SHOT OUT AT US WAS A NAIL.

WHAT ?!

HE *DID* LOOK KIND OF PALE.

WE KEEP TELL-ING HIM TO STOP BECAUSE IT'S DAN-GEROUS, BUT...

I GUESS HE'S KIND OF ANEMIC, SO HE SUCKS ON NAILS TO SUPPLEMENT THE IRON IN HIS BLOOD.

SOICHI !

TUG

UP TO HIS TRICKS AGAIN!

YOU COME AND APOLOGIZE RIGHT NOW!

I DON'T WANT TO! LEAVE ME ALONE!

WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS DOING THIS?!

SAY SOME-THING!

WHY ARE YOU LIKE THIS?!

YOU HAVE TO BE NICER!

HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA!

IT SEEMED THAT THIS SOICHI DIDN'T WANT US THERE.

HA HA HA!

HMM. WHO CAN SAY?

YOU JUST DREW THE OLD MAID, DIDN'T YOU?

HEE HEE HEE!

LOOK AT YOU ALL, HAVING FUN.

HMM.

CHK

CHK

FWP

THE OLD MAID'S ...

SHF

...THE CARD ON THE FAR RIGHT. HEH HEH HEH!

WHAT? AH!

AH! YUSUKE'S PEEKING AT YOUR CARDS.

JOLT

YOUR TURN, SAYURI!

HMPH.

I CAN'T BE BOTHERED WITH SOMETHING AS STUPID AS CARDS.

DON'T LURK OVER THERE, SOICHI. COME PLAY.

HA HA HA HA HA!

NO FAIR!

I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS... I'LL SHOW YOU TRUE HORROR.

DAMMIT. IGNORING ME. STUPID MICHINA.

AND QUIT SULKING!

THEN GO AWAY!

UNH... WHAT?

YUSUKE. YUSUKE!

TIK

TIK

WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A FUN DAY ENDED ON A SOUR NOTE BECAUSE OF THAT CREEPY BOY SOICHI.

RIBBIT RIBBIT RIBBIT RIBBIT RIBBIT RIBBIT RIBBIT RIBBIT

DOZG

DOZG

THE BATHROOM? GO BY YOURSELF. *YAWN...*

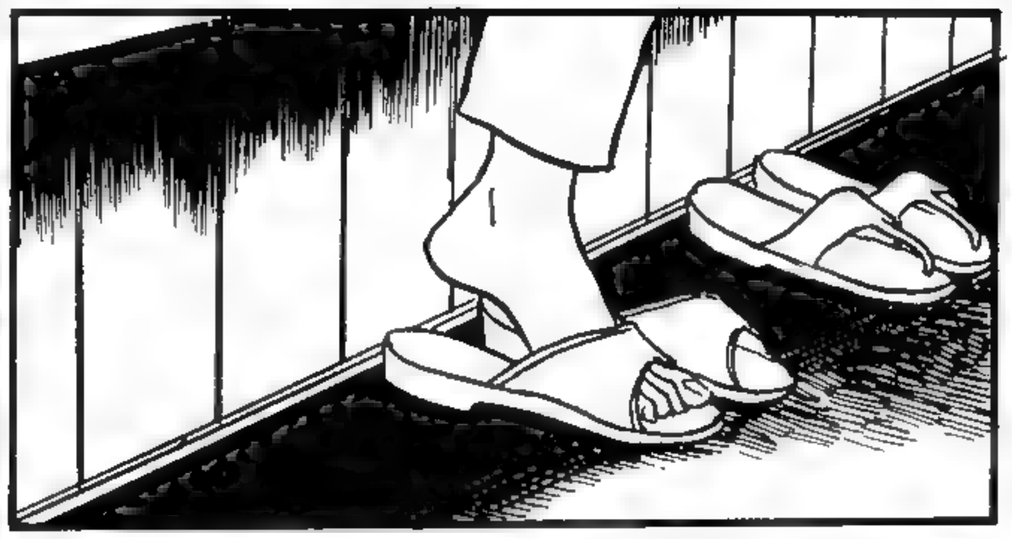
MY STOMACH HURTS. COME WITH ME TO THE BATHROOM?

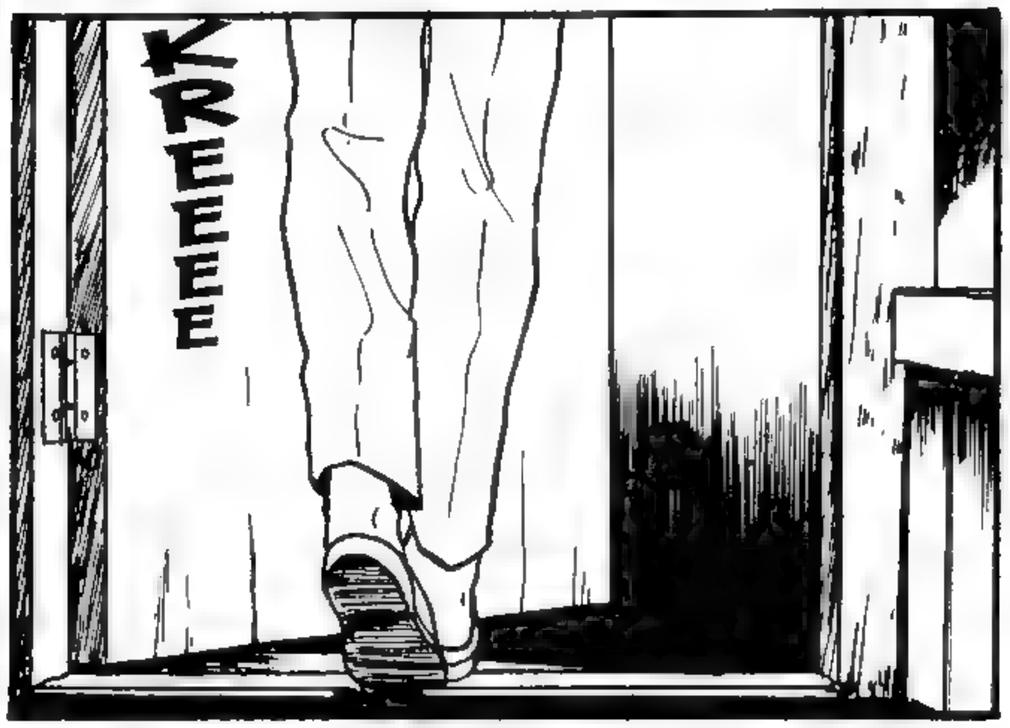
BUT...

COME ON...

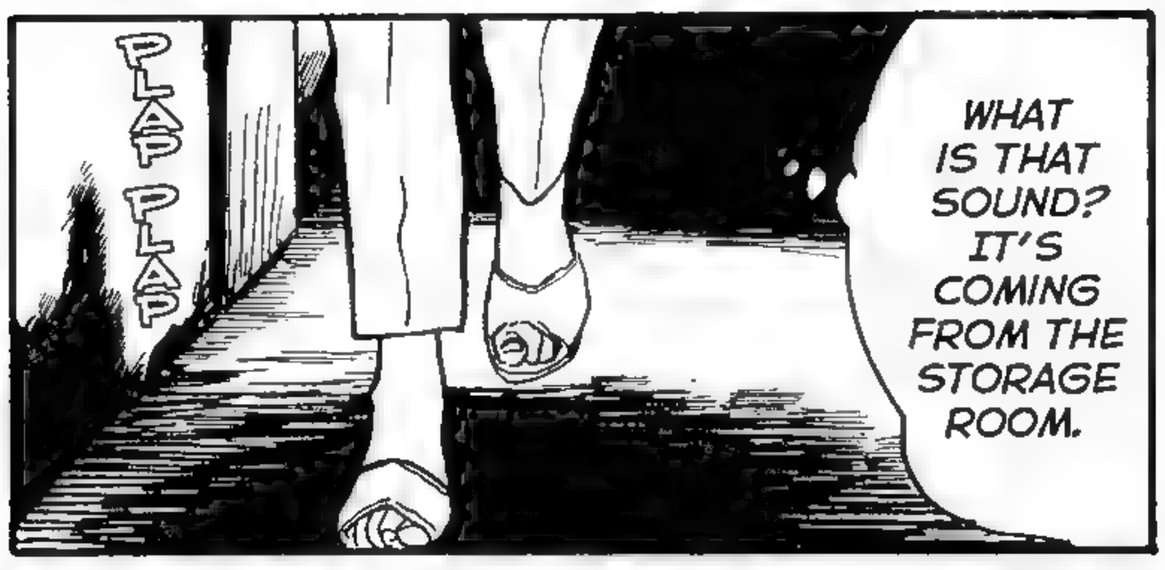
QUIT BEING A BABY. I'M TRYING TO SLEEP!

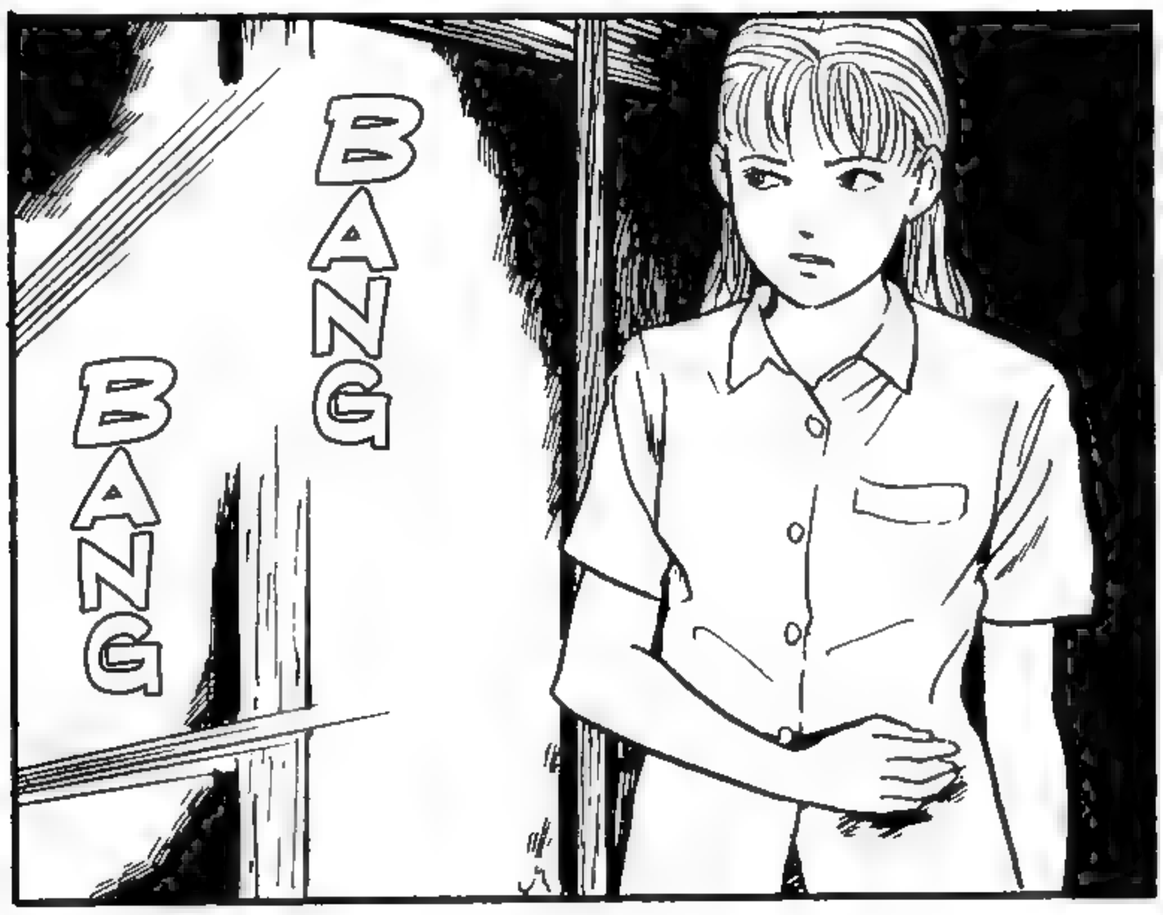
I HAVE TO GO DOWN THAT UNDER-GROUND HALLWAY TO GET TO THE BATH-ROOM.




KREEEE

BANG
BANG


PLAP PLAP
WHAT IS THAT SOUND? IT'S COMING FROM THE STORAGE ROOM.


BANG
BANG

BANG

BANG

BANG

SUFFERRR!
SUFFERRRR!

BANG

BANG

UNH!

SUFFER, MICHINAAA!

HA HA HA HA!

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH!

TMP TMP TMP

HAAH, HAAH!

BAZ BAZ

NNNNGH. WHAT?

YUSUKE! WAKE UP!

WHEN HE DID, MY HEART SUD-DENLY ...

SOICHI'S HAMMERING NAILS INTO A DOLL IN THE STORAGE ROOM!

COME ON, YUSUKE!

HE REALLY WAS HERE, THOUGH!

THERE'S NO ONE HERE.

...

YOU WERE HALF-ASLEEP. OKAY? DON'T INSULT OUR COUSINS LIKE THAT.

NOT FEELING GREAT? WELL, YOU REST UP TODAY.

OKAY.

YOU CAN'T GO TO THE POOL, MICHINA ?

ZEEE

REEEE REEEE REEEE

OKAY. HAVE FUN.

WE'RE HEADING OUT TO THE POOL.

SHF

OH? ARE YOU SICK? AND YOU WERE GOING TO GO TO THE POOL.

IS YOUR BROTHER AT THE POOL?

CAT

FSH

CURSE YOU! I'LL SCARE YOU SENSE-LESS.

IGNOR-ING ME AGAIN ?

CHK

...

HEH HEH HEH.

HEH... HEH HEH HEH!

BRBLE BRBLE BRBLE

HE CAT

SPLOOSH

KLAK

HAAH! HAAH!

IT'S YUSUKE!

MICHI! COME QUICK!

TMP TMP

CHATER CHATER CHATER

FUKAZAWA TOWN POOL

ARE YOU OKAY?!

YU-SUKE!

I'M SURE GLAD FOR THAT. IF ANYTHING HAD HAPPENED TO YOU...

DON'T WORRY. I'M FINE.

HE WAS DROWNING, BUT WE YANKED HIM OUT IN TIME. HE'S OKAY.

HEY! WHO DID IT? WE GOT A REAL JERK HERE.

I WAS WALKING BESIDE THE POOL, AND SOME-ONE PUSHED ME IN.

YOU WENT AND TRIED TO SWIM, DIDN'T YOU?!

NO.

NO... I'M SURE I WAS PUSHED.

YEAH. I SAW IT, TOO. YOU SORT OF STAG-GERED AND FELL IN.

BUT...I SAW THE WHOLE THING. WHEN YOU FELL, THERE WAS NO ONE AROUND TO PUSH YOU.

I'M SURE, UNCLE. IT WAS REALLY NOTHING.

YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO CALL HOME?

IT'S WEIRD, THOUGH. I MEAN, SOMEONE PUSHING YOU.

IT'S SO CREEPY. MAYBE IT WAS A GHOST.

HMM. WELL, IF YOU'RE SURE.

AND IF DAD FINDS OUT I ALMOST DROWNED, HE'LL BE WORRIED SICK.

WE'VE BEEN HERE A WHILE. HE SHOULD HAVE WARMED UP TO US BY NOW.

ANYWAY, IS SOICHI EATING IN HIS ROOM AGAIN TONIGHT?

HONESTLY. WHERE DOES HE GET IT FROM?

HE'S JUST THE PRIVATE TYPE.

HE ALWAYS DISAP-PEARS WHEN WE HAVE GUESTS.

LIKE THE ABILITY TO CAST CURSES.

HE'S GOT SOME KIND OF POWER.

HE TRIED TO DROWN YOU.

IT WAS PROB-ABLY HIM.

I'M TELL-ING YOU.

TIK

TIK

YU-SUKE ?

YU-SUKE!

YU-SUKE? ARE YOU LISTEN-ING TO ME?

HE'S SO CREEPY. TALKING TO HIS DOLLS, SUCKING ON NAILS.

AH!

HEH! HE'S IGNOR-ING YOU.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH BLOOD, YOU GOTTA REFILL WITH ACTUAL BLOOD.

I DON'T ACTUALLY SUCK ON NAILS FOR THE IRON, YOU KNOW.

I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH BLOOD IS WHY. AAAAH, I'M SO WOOZY.

AAAAH, I'M DIZZY. MY FACE IS SUPER PALE, RIGHT?

HEH HEH HEH!

KEH KEH KEH!

AFTER I SUCK YOUR BLOOD, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO IGNORE ME EVER AGAIN.

AND I SUCK WARM BLOOD FROM GIRLS' NECKS.

ON NIGHTS WHEN I'M DIZZY LIKE THIS, I GO OUT INTO TOWN.

STOP !

GAAAH!

WHAM

BEHAVE YOUR-SELF!

EEAAAH!

IT'S BECAUSE YOU DO THIS STUFF THAT EVERYONE IGNORES YOU!

YOU'RE JUST A KID! DON'T ACT SO CREEPY!

WAAAH!

AAA-AAAH!

ARE YOU OKAY?! HANG ON! I'LL CALL AN AMBULANCE RIGHT NOW. DON'T PANIC!

OWWW!

IT HURTS!

IT'S FINE. IT WAS HIS OWN FAULT.

I'M REALLY SORRY. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO MAKE IT UP TO SOICHI.

ARE YOU SURE WE CAN'T SEE YOU TO THE STATION?

YES. THANKS FOR HAVING US THIS WEEK.

WELL, COME BACK ANYTIME.

COME SEE US AGAIN!

SERI-OUSLY. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, MICHI.

SEE YOU!

OKAY!

HEH HEH... HEH HEH HEH.

COME BACK IF YOU'RE BRAVE ENOUGH.

HEH... HEH HEH HEH!

HEH... HEH HEH HEH!

A HAPPY SUMMER VACATION/END

A HAPPY WINTER VACATION
楽しい
冬休み

I WAS TRAVELING FOR WINTER VACATION.

I GOT OFF THE TRAIN AT A STATION CALLED FUKAZAWA.

PWAP

AFTER I'D WALKED FOR A BIT, IT STARTED TO SNOW.

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT'LL STOP SOON.

IS THERE AN INN AROUND HERE?

HEY THERE.

CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?

THIS JUST LEADS INTO THE MOUN-TAINS.

WEIRD.

KRNCH

A STRAW DOLL... FOR CURSES?

...

BANG

GASP

I SEEEEE YOU! I SAAAW THAT!

WHAT?! HEY! STOP!

I'M TELLING EVERYONE IN TOOOOOWN!

I'M TELLING! I'M GONNA TELL!

AH! THAT BOY.

I SAAAAAW THAT! I SEEEEE YOU!

SLOT

AAAAH!

I SAID, STOP!

CRUNK

GOTCHA.

HEH! HEH! HEH!

EEEE!

DRIP DRIP DRIP

HEH HEH HEH. FREEZE. FREEZE!

DRIP DRIP

W-WHAT IS WITH THIS KID?

SPLOSH

S-SO COLD!

FREEZE.

FREEZE.

HEH HEH.

MAY YOUR BLOOD FREEZE!

HEH...HEH HEH. FREEZE. FREEZE!

HEY! ARE YOU OKAY?!

AH!

WAKE UP!

HEY!

HUH?

HIROSE ...

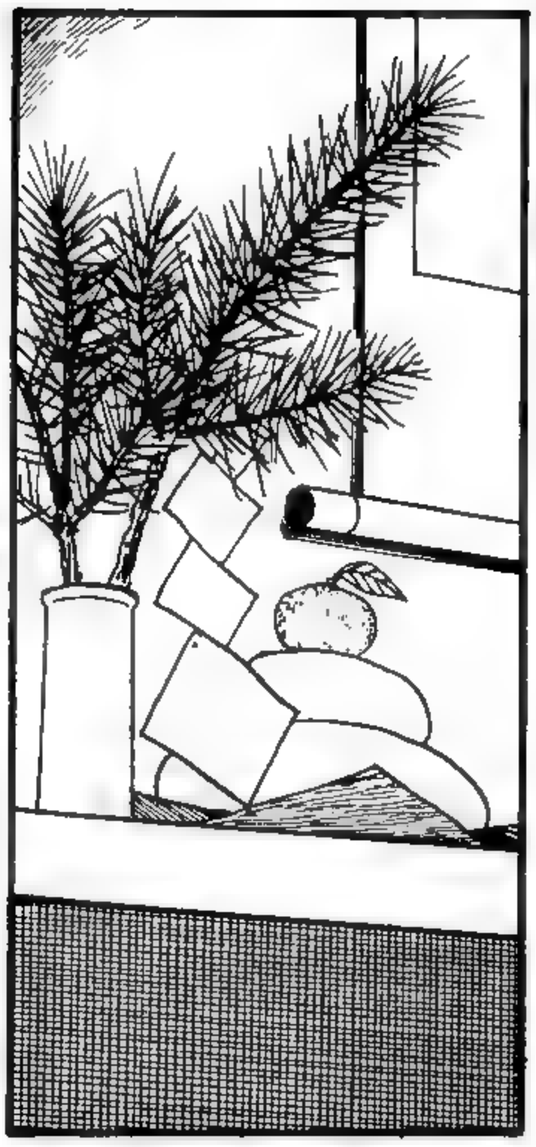
WHAT HAPPENED? WHY ARE YOU OUT HERE, SOAKING WET?

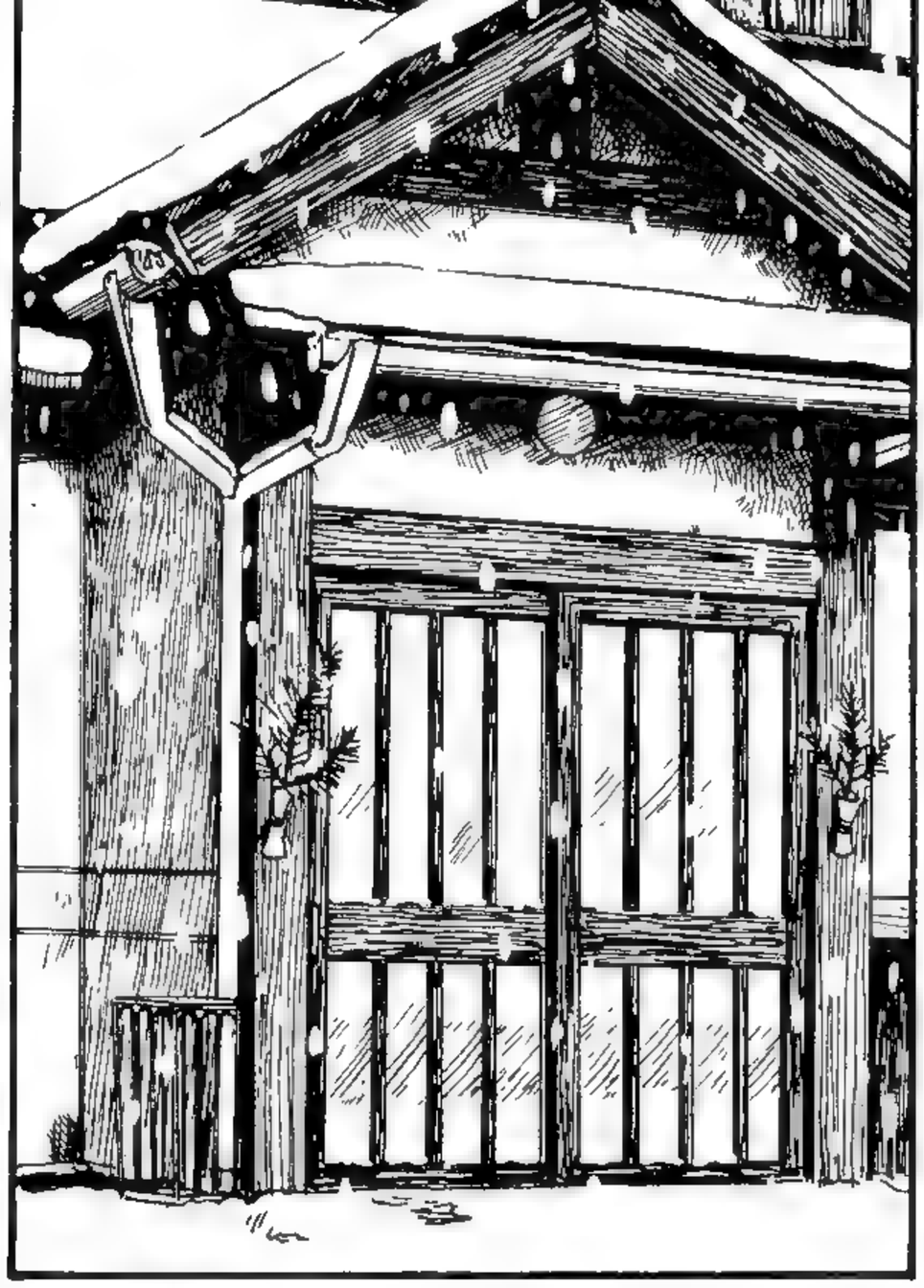
UH? WAIT.

AH!

YOU CAME... YOU CAME AFTER ME...

I'M SO HAPPY.





I FOUND YOU IN THE WOODS, SOAKING WET, SO I BROUGHT YOU TO MY HOUSE.

YOU HAVE A BIT OF A FEVER.

SO YOU'RE AWAKE?

WHERE AM I?

AH!

AND THIS IS OUR GRANDPA.

I'M KOICHI TSUJII. THIS IS MY SISTER, SAYURI.

...

WHY WERE YOU LYING THERE IN THE WOODS?

YES. I'M A THIRD-YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL.

YOU'RE A STU-DENT?

MY NAME'S YUMIKO FUKAYA.

BUT I GOT LOST AS I WALKED. I WASN'T WATCHING, AND I FELL IN A PUDDLE.

I WAS TRAVELING AND STOPPED IN THIS TOWN.

1992

HEEEEEY! I WANT SHAVED IIIIICE!

WHAT ARE THOSE MARKS ON YOUR NECK? THEY LOOK LIKE A BITE.

WHAT MARKS?

AND HERE WE GO! THE SECOND YOU GET HOME. SHAVED ICE IN THE MIDDLE OF WINTER!

I WANT SHAVED ICE! NOTHING GOOD WILL COME OF YOU NOT GIVING ME SOME, HAG!

I SAID, I WANT SOME SHAVED ICE!

SOICHI!

I WANT SOME STRAWBERRY SHAVED ICE TO FREEZE MY BLOOD!

THAT'S OUR MOM AND OUR BROTHER SOICHI...

THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK TO YOUR MOTHER!

IS GRANDPA ABOUT TO KICK IT?

LEMME SEE!

HEH HEH HEH. A SICK PERSON?

COME ON, SOICHI! BE QUIET! WE'VE GOT A SICK PERSON IN HERE.

AH!

IT'S NOT GRAND-PA.

N- NOTHING.

WHAT'S WRONG ?

IT'S NOTHING AT ALL.

SEE?

NO, YOU STILL HAVE A FEVER.

UM. I SHOULD BE GOING.

YOUR FEVER'S REALLY HIGH!

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU BEST REST.

OKAY!

SAYURI, ASK MOM FOR AN ICE PACK!

CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
CRAUK
CRAUK
AWWW, WHAT A WASTE OF ICE.
HMPH. THE YEAR IS BARELY STARTED, AND I'M ALREADY OUT OF LUCK.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? SHE'S SICK. SHE NEEDS THE ICE.
THIS ISN'T GOOD. HER FEVER DOESN'T SEEM TO BE GOING DOWN. I WONDER WHERE SHE'S FROM.
UNH... MM...
I CHECKED HER BAG, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING.
SHE DOESN'T HAVE A STUDENT I.D.?

SOICHI, IS THE TEAPOT IN HERE?

SLURP

SLURP

I CAN EAT AS MUCH AS I WANT.

THE STUFF IS EVERYWHERE OUTSIDE.

SLURP

WHERE'D YOU GET THAT?

HUH?

SLURP

SHUT UP. LEAVE ME ALONE.

NOWADAYS, IT'S GOT ALL KINDS OF GARBAGE IN IT THANKS TO POLLUTION.

ARE YOU STUPID? I MEAN, EATING SNOW, COME ON.

HUH?

IT'S EMPTY.

PACS

KOICHI ?

NO, I'M FEELING A LOT BETTER. YOU'VE REALLY BEEN SO KIND. YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW ME.

OH! YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET UP.

WHAT TIME IS IT?

NOW? ELEVEN AT NIGHT.

DID I WAKE YOU?

WELL... REASONS. AND I'M TRAVELING ON MY OWN, TOO.

WHAT? WHY NOT?

IT WASN'T A TRIP FOR FUN, ANYWAY.

IT'S TOO BAD YOUR TRIP GOT RUINED.

YOU LOOK A LOT LIKE SOMEONE I KNOW, SO...

OH. YOU SAID SOMEONE'S NAME.

HUH. IS THAT IT?

WHAT?

OH! I'M SO SORRY ABOUT BEFORE. I'M SURE I WAS I TALKING NONSENSE.

IN THE WOODS.

I'M JEALOUS YOU'RE ALREADY IN HIGH SCHOOL AND DONE WITH ALL THIS.

I'VE GOT ENTRANCE EXAMS SOON.

SEE YOU LATER.

I'M GOING TO MAKE SOME COFFEE AND GET BACK TO STUDYING.

OKAY. IT'S PRETTY LATE, AND WE CAN'T HAVE YOUR FEVER COMING BACK. PLEASE REST.

KNOCK KNOCK

RIGHT. I MEAN, THERE'S NO REASON HIROSE WOULD COME AFTER ME.

...

KNOCK

KNOCK

WHO'S THERE ?!

YOU KNOW, THIS SYRUP IS REALLY GOOD.

SLRP

SLRP

AND THEN, SHE FINDS A STRAW DOLL. HEH HEH.

I GUESS THIS GIRL WAS DUMPED.

HER HEART CAN'T FORGET HIM NO MATTER HOW SHE TRIES. SHE WANTS TO FORGET. AND SO, A SOLO JOURNEY. AAH, BELOVED. DEAREST DARLING, AAH, HOW HATEFUL.

HEY, SOICHI. YOU'LL DO IT FOR HER... WHAT?

THE CURSE.

IT'S SOICHI, RIGHT? LISTEN. I HAMMERED THAT NAIL IN AS A JOKE.

SHE TRIES TO CURSE HIM, BUT TO NO EFFECT.

UH. UM.

BUT THE CURSE RITUAL'S SUCH A HASSLE.

OKAY THEN, LET'S DO IT. WE JUST HAVE TO KILL THIS "HIROSE", YEAH?

BUT IT'S ALMOST GONE. I'LL DO IT IF SHE'LL GIVE ME MORE.

IT'S REALLY GOOD OVER ICE.

WELL, YOU GOT SYRUP FROM HER.

WHY SHOULD I?

THUK

THEN HOW ABOUT WE DO IT THIS WAY?

HEH HEH.

I CAN HAVE MORE YUMMY STRAWBERRY SHAVED ICE.

FALL, FALL, FALL, SNOW. COVER THE GROUND.

NOW I CAN HAVE MORE SYRUP.

AAH, DELIGHT-FUL. I'M SO HAPPY.

A SYRUP CALLED BLOOD...

NO WAY...

WHAT IS HIS DEAL, MUTTERING TO HIMSELF?

AND BLOOD?

KLAK

I'VE NEVER SEEN IT PILED SO HIGH.

OH, GOODNESS. I WONDER HOW LONG THIS'LL KEEP UP. YUSUKE AND MICHINA ARE SUPPOSED TO COME TOMORROW.

AND IT'S STILL FALLING!

SO MUCH SNOW!

WHOA! MOM, LOOK!

THIS BLIZZARD WILL IMPACT TRANSIT IN ALL REGIONS.

DUE TO A STRONG COLD FRONT COMING IN FROM SIBERIA, THE SEA OF JAPAN COAST IS SEEING ITS HEAVIEST SNOW THIS WINTER.

MNCH MNCH

MM. FEELS LOWER THAN YESTER-DAY.

LET ME SEE.

FWMP

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERY-THING.

DEAR ME! AWAKE ALREADY? HOW'S THAT FEVER?

OH! IT'S GONE.

DON'T BE SHY. YOU REST UP.

BUT THERE'S A BLIZZARD. NO ONE'S GOING ANYWHERE.

OHH.

NO, I'M OKAY. THANK YOU.

BUT YOU SHOULD REST A LITTLE MORE.

I SHOULD GO.

"COVER THE GROUND."

"FALL, FALL, FALL, SNOW."

IT REALLY IS A BLIZZARD.

GLANCE

...AND LANDED ON YUSUKE HIROSE, A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT AT A JUNIOR HIGH...

NOW FOR OUR NEXT STORY. AROUND ELEVEN LAST NIGHT, A SIGN FELL FROM A BUILDING IN TOKYO'S TAITO WARD...

...

THAT'S BORING.

TCH! MESSED UP. HE WAS ONLY HURT.

DID THEY SAY HIROSE?!

THE POLICE... AS A CRIME...ANY WITNESSES...

...CAUSING SERIOUS INJURY.

WHAT ?!

YUMIKO! WHAT'S WRONG?

IT CAN'T BE. THAT BOY DID THIS?

BUT YUSUKE HIROSE, THAT'S A NAME I'VE HEARD BEFORE.

MUCH MUCH

HEH HEH.

RING

OH NO. HIROSE, PLEASE DON'T DIE.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

OH NO!

YUSUKE ?!

YOU'RE CALLING FROM THE HOSPITAL? WHY? IS SOMEONE SICK?

HELLO, TSUJII RESIDENCE... OH! MICHINA? YOU'RE STILL COMING TOMORROW— WHAT?

RING

MOM!

IT'S A BLIZ-ZARD.

GEEZ, THIS SNOW!

I'M HOME!

KLAK

PAT

PAT

AND YUSUKE'S PARENTS SAID IT'S NOT AS BAD AS THEY FIRST THOUGHT, SO WE SHOULDN'T TRY AND COME IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS WEATHER.

WELL, THAT'S THE THING. BECAUSE OF THE STORM, NONE OF THE TRAINS AND BUSES ARE RUNNING.

I'M COMING TO TOKYO, TOO!

SHE'S SLEEPING NOW. HER FEVER'S BACK UP.

ANYWAY, WHERE'S YUMIKO?

HEY, MOM? I THINK SHE KNOWS YUSUKE. ALTHOUGH SHE WON'T ACTUALLY TALK TO ME ABOUT IT.

WHAT A TERRIBLE THING TO HAVE HAPPEN.

THAT NIGHT ...

KNOCK

KNOCK

KNOCK

AH!

KNOCK

KNOCK

KNOCK

NO WONDER YOU MISTOOK MY BROTHER FOR HIM. THEY *ARE* SECOND COUSINS AND ALL.

IT'S QUITE THE COINCIDENCE THAT THE ONE WHO DUMPED YOU WAS YUSUKE.

W-WHAT ?!

I TOOK SOME BLOOD... WHILE YOU WERE ASLEEP.

HEH HEH.

SHE

OH HO? WHERE TO?

OR MAYBE YOU'RE ACTUALLY IN JUNIOR HIGH? LYING ABOUT YOUR AGE AND TRAVELING ALONE?

THAT YUSUKE. ONLY IN JUNIOR HIGH AND BLOWING OFF A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL...

I-I'M SO WEAK.

YOU CAN'T GO OUTSIDE BECAUSE OF THE SNOW.

CHAK CHAK

HYOOO

FWMP

HEH HEH! NO POINT IN RUNNING.

KLATTER KLATTER

FWMP+FWMP

FWMP

IT'S PUNISHMENT FOR HAMMERING IN THAT NAIL. I MEAN, IT WASN'T LIKE HE WAS LEADING ME ON. HIROSE, I'M SORRY...

I'M DONE FOR.

HOZNK

AAH. I CAN'T MOVE.

HOZNK

HOZNK

YUMIKO!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?!

YUMIKO!

GRAB ON TO ME!

ARE YOU OKAY?!

WHO'S THERE ?!

HM?

WHY WOULD YOU GO OUTSIDE?

YUMIKO.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?

SOICHI!

YOU ATE TOO MUCH SNOW, STUPID.

YOUR STOMACH'S UPSET, ISN'T IT?

SHUT UP.

IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?

NOTH-ING.

OW OW OW OW OW OW.

OW OW.

OW ...

THAT'S NOT IT.

HEH ...

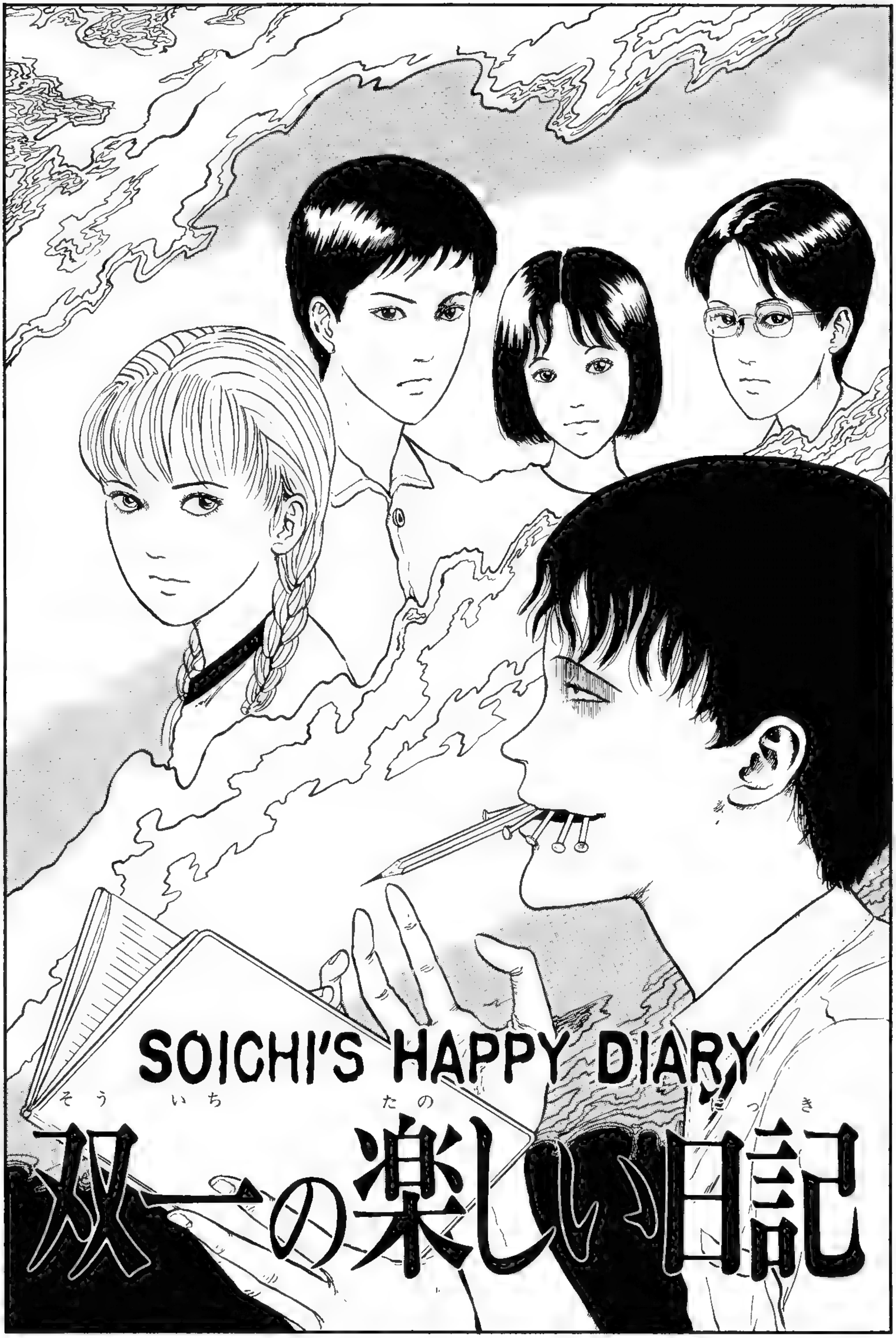
I TASTED WHAT WAS IN THE BOTTLE. IT WASN'T BLOOD, JUST STRAWBERRY SYRUP.

THE NEXT DAY, THE SNOW BEGAN TO MELT WITH SURPRISING SPEED, AND I LEFT THE HOUSE.

WHAT EXACTLY WAS UP WITH THAT BOY? AND WHAT WERE THE MARKS ON MY NECK? I DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND.

IT HURTS!

A HAPPY WINTER VACATION/END


SOICHI'S HAPPY DIARY
そういちたのにっき
双一の楽しい日記

KATUNK

WE ESCAPED TOKYO FOR SUMMER BREAK, OFF TO FUKAZAWA FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A YEAR!

WE WERE PLANNING TO STAY FOR A WEEK.

KATUNK

WELL, YOU GOT HURT, SO WE COULDN'T COME FOR WINTER BREAK LIKE WE WERE SUPPOSED TO.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S BEEN A WHOLE YEAR!

THAT WASN'T MY FAULT, MICHINA. IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.

FUKAZAWA. FUKAZAWA.

MICHI! YUSUKE!

AH! SAYURI AND KOICHI!

YOU'RE FINALLY HERE!

SHE'S JUST EXCITED TO BE BACK AFTER SO LONG.

HA HA HA! SAME OLD MICHI, *HUH?*

I LOVE THE COUNTRY!

IT'S SUMMER BREAK, BUT HE'S SITTING IN HIS ROOM, MUTTERING AWAY.

HIM? SAME AS ALWAYS.

SO HOW'S SOICHI?

I CAN'T BELIEVE A KID LIKE THAT LIVES IN THIS PEACEFUL PLACE.

OH, RIGHT. I FORGOT ABOUT SOICHI.

FORGET HIM, THOUGH. YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY. YOU HAVE TO HAVE FUN.

HUH ?!

AH! MICHINA, WATCH OUT!

AH!

KRK

YEAH, I'M OKAY.

PAY ATTENTION TO WHERE YOU'RE GOING, DUMMY.

MICHI?

YOU OKAY?

WHO'S LEAVING STUFF LIKE THIS ON THE ROAD?

KLANK LATER

NAILS ...

HE WAS BEING SO WEIRD WITH ME THAT I SLAPPED HIM. AND THEN...

WHAM

HE REALLY WAS CREEPY. HAMMERING NAILS INTO DOLLS, PRETENDING TO BE A VAMPIRE.

HE ALWAYS HAD SO MANY NAILS IN HIS MOUTH LAST YEAR.

NAILS REMIND ME OF HIM.

CHK

CHK

I GUESS THAT'S HEALED UP BY NOW.

...THREE NAILS STABBED THROUGH HIS CHEEKS.

YES, PICTURE OF HEALTH.

YUSUKE, YOU'RE ALL BETTER NOW?

WELCOME! YOU MUST BE TIRED AFTER YOUR TRIP.

WE'RE BACK! WE BROUGHT YUSUKE AND MICHINA.

I THOUGHT I WAS DEAD THERE. HA HA HA!

I WAS SO SHOCKED TO HEAR A SIGN FELL ON YOU!

EXCUSE ME!

HEY! MICHINA!

STMP STMP

AUNTIE, IS SOICHI IN HIS ROOM?

HM? OH, YES, HE IS.

HE'S SUCH A SOUR-PUSS, MAKING TROU-BLE FOR EVERY-ONE.

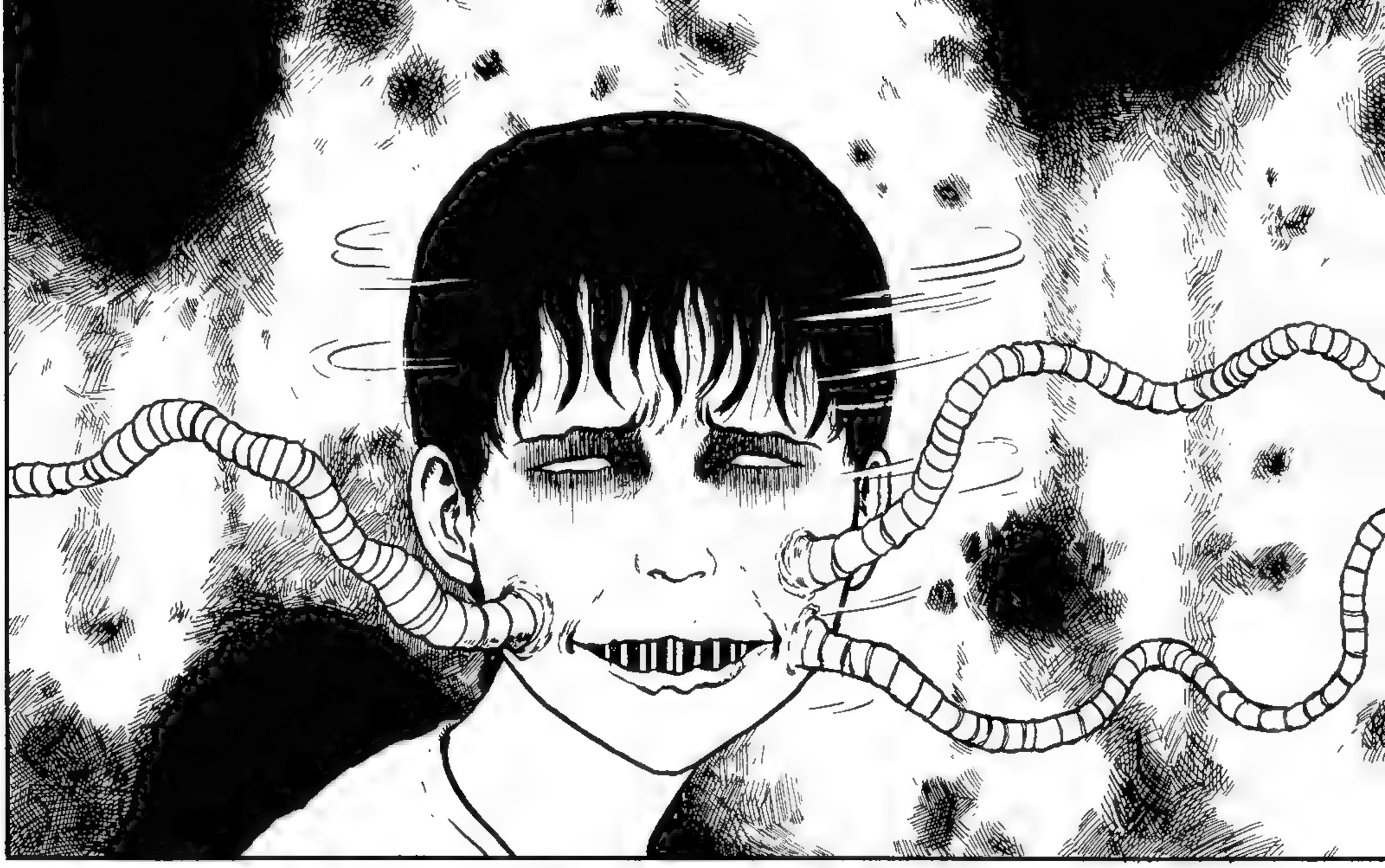
BUT MAYBE HE JUST WANTS SOME-ONE TO HANG OUT WITH HIM.

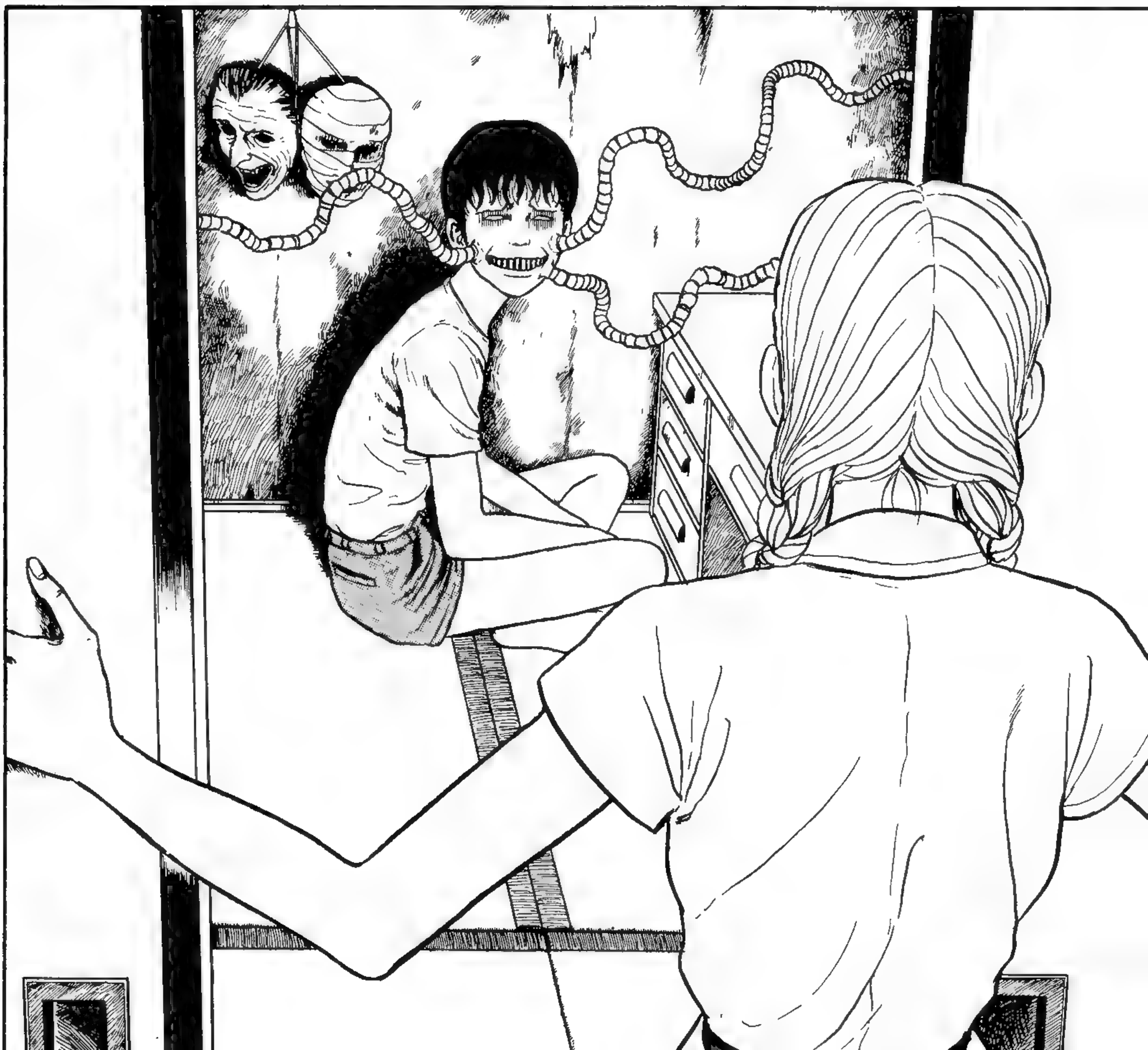
ONLY HE'S WEIRD ABOUT IT, SO INSTEAD, EVERYONE STAYS AWAY FROM HIM.

SOMEONE HAS TO EXTEND A HAND TO HIM.

SOICHI!!

KLATT





SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

CAN'T YOU TELL? AFTER YOU STABBED ME, THE SCARS TURNED INTO THESE.

KEE SHEE SHEE.

S-SOICHI, WHAT...

YOU'RE THE ABSURD ONE! THREE NAILS WENT RIGHT THROUGH MY CHEEKS. I'M GOING TO MAKE YOUR GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN FEEL THE PAIN OF IT. KEE SHEE SHEE!

THIS IS ABSURD.

WRITHE

SQUIRM

KEE SHEE SHEE SHEE!

SHWE

AAAAH!

CLANK

EEEAAAH! LET GO OF ME!

RRRIP

KATUNK

PUSH PUSH PUSH

AAH!

I GOT YOU, SUCKER! THE TENTACLES ARE FAAAKE!

MWAH HA HA HA HA HA!

SOICHI! DID YOU DO THIS?

KEE SHEE SHEE!

AH! LOOK AT ALL THIS MUCK!

MICHI? WHAT HAP-PENED?

DAM-MIT.

WHERE'D HE GO? HE'S SO FAST.

YOU'RE ON MY LIST, MICHINA!

BLEEEH! TAKE THAT!

AH! STOP!

THIS IS WHAT I GET FOR FEELING SYMPATHY FOR THAT KID.

ARE YOU OKAY? LET'S GET YOU CLEANED UP.

IT'S SUMMER, SO YOUR CLOTHES WILL DRY QUICKLY AT LEAST.

I'M SO SORRY, MICHINA.

REEE

REEE

FEELS GOOD.

HA HA HA! SOICHI LOVES SHAVED ICE, BUT HE CAN'T SHOW HIS FACE NOW.

I LOVE IT!

AAAH, THE CUSTOMARY SHAVED ICE.

IT'D BE HARD FOR HIM TO COME HOME AFTER A PRANK LIKE THAT.

SOICHI'S REALLY LATE. WHERE IS HE?

TIK TIK

TIK TIK

SUPPER CAME AND WENT, AND SOICHI STILL HADN'T RETURNED.

RIGHT. OKAY, HOW ABOUT WE GO LOOK FOR HIM?

BUT IT'S PRETTY LATE.

OKAY, FINE.

YOU STAY HERE. IT'S DARK, AND YOU COULD FALL AGAIN.

I'LL COME, TOO! WHAT ABOUT YOU, MICHI?

SURE, I'LL COME.

...

ムーン

ムーン

ムーン

SEE YOU SOON. BE CAREFUL.

PSSSH

ジー

ジー

ジー

WE'LL LET HIM HAVE IT WHEN WE FIND HIM.

ONE TIME, WE FOUND HIM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, HOWLING AT THE FULL MOON.

DOES THIS KIND OF THING HAPPEN A LOT?

FLAP FLAP

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT GOES ON IN HIS HEAD.

FLAP FLAP

AS HIS BROTHER, I'M EMBARRASSED.

SOMETIMES HE JUST DISAPPEARS.

FLAP FLAP

EEEEAH!

AH!

THERE SURE ARE A TON OF THEM TONIGHT.

FLAP FLAP

BATS!

FLAP FLAP

THE PLATE'S BROKEN ...

NOW LOOK WHAT I'VE DONE.

AH!

CRASH

I'M THE ONE WHO'S SORRY, MICHI. GETTING YOU TO HELP ME WHEN YOU'RE SO TIRED.

OH! I'LL THROW IT AWAY.

SHF SHF SHF

ARE YOU OKAY? NO CUTS?

I'M SORRY, AUNTIE. I WAS TRYING TO HELP.

KLATTER KLATTER

I'VE GOT NO LUCK TODAY.

MAN.

OKAY, COULD YOU TOSS IT IN THE BIN BY THE BACK DOOR?

SURE!

SO HE'S STILL NOT BACK.

AND WOW, HIS ROOM IS REALLY DISTURBING.

Soichi's Diary by Soichi

はじめに
秘密の日記
オレ様の日記
がこれを読
これを盗み
リスの使
に今
ん
たら

TERRIBLE HANDWRITING...

...

FLIP

But you, reading this diary in sekret right now! It's not on me if you die! If you don't want to die, stop reading!

WHAT KIND OF INTRO IS THIS?

SO MANY SPELLING MISTAKES.

If anyone dares to read it, you will be cursed by Abunis, servant to the god of death, Osiris.

—Introduction—
This is a sekret diary. This is the diary of the Great Lord Soichi—me, the greatest—and none other than my amazing self are alowed to read it.

I feel sorry for myself having such a fool for a brother. As his little brother, I'm embarrassed.

...and goes, "Quit staying up all night and go to bed already." He has the nerve to act like the big brother and go ordering me—ME! around!

December 30. I was watching *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* on Midnight Theater last night when the jerk Koichi comes along...

WHAT AN AWFUL DIARY.

JUST WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS, ANYWAY?

If Koichi doesn't mend his ways, then as his brother, I will have to punish him.

I KNEW HE WAS WEIRD, BUT HE'S EVEN WORSE THAN I THOUGHT.

HE'S LOST IN FANTASY.

So I turned into a bat and headed into town. I sucked the blood of a drunk woman on her way home from a New Year's party, and I got a little drunk, too.

December 31. I was watching *Taste the Blood of Dracula* when Lord Me wanted some fresh blood for the first time in a while.

July 30. Today has been very gloomy.

OH! HE IS. THIS IS YESTERDAY'S DATE. HE WROTE THIS YESTERDAY.

I WONDER IF HE'S STILL WRITING THIS NONSENSE DIARY.

FLIP FLIP

But I will come out on top!

Because that evil Michina is coming from Tokyo tomorrow!!

N-NO WAY. HE WROTE THIS YESTERDAY?

RIDICU-LOUS.

I-IT'S A COINCIDENCE. HE JUST GUESSED RIGHT.

First, I'll make her fall all awkward and clumsy on the road tomorrow. Heh heh heh. But that's only the first act! After that, I'll serve her some huge helpings of horror!

I'm going to show her real horror with all kinds of curses! La la la!

After that, she'll get covered in mud. And then she'll be a little busybody and break a plate probably. But it won't end there.

I cursed her with a straw doll. The start of the curses.

Also, I saw a girl in the forest nailing up a straw doll. Lord Me likes girls like that. I wanted to suck her blood.

HE'S NOT NORMAL...

THIS IS FROM WINTER BREAK LAST YEAR.

OH ...

January 1 (cloudy). A gloomy start to the year. Because that Michina's coming to our house. Even though I really gave it to her last summer, she still hasn't learned her lesson.

FLIP FLIP

1月1日 (くもり)

January 2 (snowstorm). The year's off to a happy start! That loathsome Michina's brother Yusuke was caught under a falling sign in Tokyo and badly hurt. Glad tidings.

Yesterday's straw doll curse made it to Tokyo. Heh shee shee!

IMPOSSIBLE. HE'S LYING!

SO THEN... THAT ACCIDENT WAS BECAUSE OF SOICHI'S CURSE?!

W- WHAT ?!

PLOP

CREAK CREAK

SOICHI RETURNED LATE THAT NIGHT.

CHK CHK

CREAK CREAK

YES, PLEASE.

WANT SOME MORE, YUSUKE?

CHIRP

CHIRP

GLANCE

...

SOICHI! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? COME OUT AND EAT RIGHT NOW, OR I'M PUTTING EVERYTHING AWAY.

HA HA HA HA!

ALL RIGHT! SWIM-MING AGAIN THIS YEAR!

HAVE FUN! MAKE SURE YOU WARM UP PROPERLY.

WE'RE OFF TO THE POOL!

I FORGOT MY EAR-PLUGS.

SO? YOU'LL BE FINE WITHOUT THEM.

WHAT'S WRONG, MICHI?

AH!

I'LL GRAB THEM. YOU GO ON AHEAD.

BUT I BOUGHT THEM FOR THIS.

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY BAG?!

DIG DIG DIG DIG

AH!

I KNOW YOU HAVE IT.

GIVE IT BACK OR MEET A HORRIBLE FATE.

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?!

PUT IT ALL BACK RIGHT NOW!

SAY SOME-THING!

I'LL REMEMBER THIS. YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY WITH IT.

I'LL CURSE YOU. CURSE YOU... TUTANKHA-MEN...

DAMMIT. FAKING IGNO-RANCE...

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. JUST STOP WITH YOUR NONSENSE.

I'M CALLING YOUR MOM!

A MOS-QUITO... A MOS-QUITO.

YOU BEST BE CAREFUL.

TUTANKHA-MEN...

I'LL CURSE YOU. CURSE YOU...

BZZZ

BE CAREFUL OF MOSQUITOES.

TING TING

RIGHT. I WAS TIRED AFTER THE POOL, SO I TOOK A NAP.

ZEEE REEE REEE

A DREAM ...

BLINK

BNNN

A MOS-QUITO!

BZZZ

MICHI! WHAT'S WRONG?!

AAAAAAAAH!

AUGUST

WHERE?

BZZZ

A MOS-QUITO ?

THERE... RIGHT THERE!

A MOSQUITO! THERE!

BZZz

CLAP

BZZz

WELL, IT'S NO WONDER. YOU HARDLY EVER SEE ONES THAT BIG.

DON'T SCREAM LIKE THAT OVER A MOSQUITO!

CRAP, IT GOT AWAY.

WHAT ?!

AH, MICHI. THE MOSQUITO GOT YOU. IN THREE SPOTS.

THE SAME SPOTS WHERE SOICHI GOT STABBED WITH THE NAILS.

AND THEY KEEP GETTING PUFFIER.

UGH.

IT MUST'VE BITTEN ME WHILE I WAS ASLEEP.

AH! YOU'RE RIGHT. ON MY CHEEKS.

KEH KEH!

KEH KEH KEH KEH!

AH!

KEH KEH KEH KEH!

SO YOU WANNA GIVE *IT* BACK NOW?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO MEND YOUR WAYS, NOW'S THE TIME.

NOW YOU KNOW MY TERRIBLE MIGHT...

KEH KEH KEH KEH!

YOU'LL PAY...

EVIL MICHINA.

...TONIGHT...

WHY SHOULD I BE AFRAID OF YOU?

WOULD YOU QUIT IT?!

ARE YOU STUPID ?!

WHAT'S WRONG, MICHINA?

ANOTHER MOSQUI-TO?

-OOOOOOOOZ

DO SOME-THING!

HEY! YUSUKE!

THE MOS-QUITO... THE MOSQUITO BITES ARE...

WHAT HAPPENED ?!

GAH!

IT'S A CURSE!

KEE SHEE SHEE!

DIVINE PUNISH-MENT!

THE WRATH OF TUTANKHAMEN!

IT'S BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T HEED MY WARNING!

KEE SHEE SHEE SHEE SHEE SHEE SHEE SHEE!

KEH KEH KEH! WHO CAN SAY!

SOICHI!

THOSE MAY WELL GROW INTO TERRIFYING TENTACLES!

I'LL GIVE IT BACK. HERE.

YOUR DIARY.

Soichi's Diary By Soichi

I WAS WRONG.

I GET IT.

FINE.

YOU WROTE IT, RIGHT?

AND THIS LETTER, TOO.

WELL, I'LL READ IT TO YOU THEN.

OH? YOU DON'T?

HEH... HEH HEH. WHAT? I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS.

AND FROM THE LETTER, I'D GUESS SHE'S IN YOUR CLASS?

IT'S ADDRESSED TO YURIKO ANJO.

IT WAS STUCK IN YOUR DIARY. YOU'RE NOT GONNA SEND IT?

WAH!

WAH!

WAH!

"DEAR YURIKO, HOW ARE YOU? I'M GOOD. ANYWAY, I'M BEWITCHED. YOU ARE SO BEAU—"

THE NEXT MORNING, MY CHEEKS WERE BACK TO NORMAL.

WAH!

WAH!

...

I USED SOICHI'S WEAKNESS TO WIPE OUT HIS CURSE.

...HAD SOICHI'S FACE.

I'M PRETTY SURE THAT HUGE MOSQUITO THAT GOT ME...

BZZZZ

THE REST OF THE WEEK SHOULD BE LOADS OF FUN BEFORE WE GO BACK TO TOKYO. BUT...

...THERE'S ONE THING I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT.

SOICHI'S HAPPY DIARY/END

SOICHI'S HOME VISIT

双一の家庭訪問

AAAH!

SORRY, MICHI!

SUM-MER VACA-TION...

MY BROTHER AND I WERE JUST FINISHING UP A WEEK AT OUR RELATIVES' PLACE IN THE COUNTRY.

POK

WHOA! TOO HIGH!

HERE I COME!

OKAY, KOICHI!

I'M SORRY.

OH!

HERE.

THANKS. UH, DID YOU NEED SOMETHING?

OH! YOU'RE HIS TEACHER?

I'M SOICHI'S HOME-ROOM TEACHER, YANAGIDA.

SOICHI? YES, I THINK HE'S HERE.

IS SOICHI HOME?

HUH? HE'S NOT HERE.

OH WAIT. HIDING IN THE CLOSET.

I APOLOGIZE FOR THE SUDDEN VISIT, MRS. TSUJII.

GOODNESS! SOICHI'S TEACHER? PLEASE DO COME IN. DON'T MIND THE MESS.

HEEEEY! SOICHI!

QUIT IT! LET GO OF ME!

I THOUGHT I WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUMMER BREAK TO SIT DOWN AND REALLY TALK WITH HIM.

I SUP-POSE YOU WOULD.

WATCHING SOICHI AT SCHOOL, I DO HAVE A FEW CONCERNS.

MY...YOU WOULD? WELL, IF YOU THINK THAT WOULD BE BEST, MR. YANAGIDA.

DRAG DRAG

IF IT'S NOT AN INCON-VENIENCE, I'D LIKE TO HAVE SOICHI STAY WITH ME FOR A WHILE.

I WAS JUST TALKING WITH YOUR MOM.

HEY THERE, SOICHI! DOING YOUR HOMEWORK?

I DO WORRY ABOUT HIS FUTURE.

WITH THAT DIFFICULT PERSONALITY OF HIS, WELL...

I GOT HIM.

NO WAY AM I GOING TO YOUR HOUSE.

NUH-UH.

NOOOO! LET GO OF MEEEEE!

MR. YANAGIDA, I THINK IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR HIM!

SOICHI! DON'T SPEAK TO YOUR TEACHER LIKE THAT!

I'VE GOT NOTHING TO "SIT AND TALK" WITH YOU ABOUT.

VRRRRRRRR

VRRM VRRM

I'M KIND OF RE-LIEVED.

HA HA! WELP, THAT'S THAT.

SOICHI WENT OFF TO DO SOME MENTAL TRAINING.

WHAT ARE YOU ALL DOING OUT HERE?

HOW WAS STUDYING AT THE LIBRARY?

OH! HI, YUSUKE.

I'M BACK!

BIT SAD WITH BOTH OF THEM GONE.

HUH. AND SAYURI'S AT TRAIN-ING CAMP WITH HER TEAM.

HMM. I'M NOT REALLY SURE.

BUT YOU'RE STAYING, RIGHT, MICHI?

I WISH I COULD STAY LONGER, BUT CRAM SCHOOL'S STARTING.

YOU'RE GOING BACK TO TOKYO TOMORROW, YUSUKE? WE'LL MISS YOU.

I HAVE ENTRANCE EXAMS NEXT YEAR, SO.

OKAY.

SOICHI'S GONE NOW, TOO. WHY DON'T YOU HANG AROUND A BIT LONGER?

WE'D LOVE FOR HER TO STAY.

DON'T WEAR OUT YOUR WELCOME, MICHINA. YOU COME HOME, TOO.

"RUN AWAY"? HOW RUDE. THAT JERK TEACHER WAS MAKING ME DO JUDO. REALLY SOMETHING.

W-WHAT? DID YOU RUN AWAY ALREADY ?!

THE "SOICHI" YOU SPEAK OF HAS RETURNED.

IN THE END, SOICHI CAME HOME THAT EVENING.

SAY HI TO YOUR MOM AND DAD FOR US.

OKAY THEN. THANKS FOR LETTING MICHINA STAY.

DON'T CAUSE ANY TROUBLE FOR AUNTIE.

YEAH, YOU TOO.

HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME, YUSUKE!

OH! THESE SHOES... I GUESS WE HAVE A VISITOR?

HAAH, IT'S SWEL-TERING OUT.

I LET MYSELF IN. I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND.

OH! IT'S YOU, MR. YANAGIDA!

COME ON! I SAID, STOP!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.

BUT YOU MUST BE BUSY?

SO IF IT'S NO TROUBLE, I'D LIKE TO COME TO HIM.

NO, NO. IT WAS A MISTAKE TO FORCE HIM TO COME.

YES-TERDAY, SOICHI ...

DON'T GET CHEEKY!

BUT PUSHING YOURSELF LIKE THIS, YOU WON'T LAST LONG.

I KNOW YOU'RE ALL EXCITED BECAUSE YOU'RE NEW.

YOU'RE CAUSING TROUBLE FOR EVERY-ONE.

AND THEN AT RECESS, YOU SHOOT NAILS OUT OF YOUR MOUTH. THAT ONE TIME, YOU HURT THE CLASS REP!

YOU'RE ALREADY IN SIXTH GRADE, BUT YOU'RE ABSENT ALL THE TIME. AND WHEN YOU ARE THERE, YOU MUTTER TO YOURSELF DURING CLASS, BOTHERING EVERYONE ELSE.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU. YOU'LL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING LIKE THIS!

DO YOU HATE SCHOOL? ARE YOU HAVING PROBLEMS? LET ME HAVE IT. I'M ALWAYS HERE TO TALK.

WHAT? REALLY?

MICHI, COME LOOK AT THIS. THEY'RE PLAYING BADMIN-TON.

NEEEE

HERE WE GO!

NOW LISTEN, SOICHI!

LIKE I SAID YESTERDAY, WE'RE GOING TO INSTILL A HEALTHY MIND IN A HEALTHY BODY.

POK

THIS YANAGIDA FELLOW IS REAL PASSIONATE.

HE REALLY IS. IT'S KIND OF IMPRESSIVE.

COME NOW! WHAT WAS THAT? YOU HAVE TO AT LEAST TRY!

PLOP

OKAY. NOW YOU SERVE.

POK

OOOH

C'MON!

WATCH, MICHI! IT'LL BE ANOTHER EMPTY SWING, FOR SURE!

I GOT IT! I GOT IT!

WOW! IT'S WAY UP THERE!

POK

CRASH

AAH!

I GOT YOU! I GOOOT YOOOUUU!

WAH HA HA HA HA!

BLEHHH!

SAY YOU'RE SORRY!

HEY! SOICHI!

YOU MADE ANOTHER TRAP?!

SO WHAT'LL IT BE? CARDS?

LET'S DO SOMETHING *YOU* LIKE TODAY.

I'M CHANGING COURSE A BIT. IF YOU HATE EXERCISE, THEN I WON'T FORCE YOU.

MR. YANAGIDA VISITED SOICHI AGAIN THE NEXT DAY.

I WANT TO SUMMON SPIRITS.

GO ON AND TELL ME WHAT YOU LIKE TO DO.

OR MAYBE SHOGI?

SUMMON SPIRITS?

WHAT? SO THEN HOW DO YOU DO IT?

YEAH. BUT IN MY HOUSE, WE DON'T NEED THE BOARD.

LIKE USE A OUIJA BOARD TO TALK TO GHOSTS? THAT KIND OF THING?

YOU JUST HAVE TO TALK TO THAT DOLL.

ERR, OH VAUNTED DOLL!

WILL SOICHI MEND HIS WAYS?

ASK A QUESTION, MR. YANAGIDA.

OKAY... RIGHT. GOT IT.

WELL, FINE. HOW ABOUT I ASK SOMETHING ELSE THEN? ERR, OH VAUNTED DOLL!

IT'S NOT STUPID.

MR. YANAGIDA, QUIT WITH THE STUPID QUESTIONS.

YOU WILL BE ALONE ALL YOUR LIFE.

WILL THE PERSON I MARRY BE BEAUTIFUL?

THAT'S SOME IMPRESSIVE VENTRILOQUISM.

HEY! DID YOU SAY THAT, SOICHI?

THE DOLL SAID THAT.

IT'S NOT VENTRILO-QUISM.

...

BUT HE'S BEEN MORE SUBDUED LATELY.

HE REALLY IS PASSIONATE. HE'S BEEN COMING EVERY DAY.

WELL, ABOUT THAT... IT'S A LITTLE STRANGE.

PSSH

A FEW DAYS LATER ...

CROAK CROAK

MORE SO EVERY DAY...

MR. YANAGIDA LOOKS DRAINED.

HOW?

STRANGE ?

OKAY.

MICHI, LET'S GO TAKE A PEEK.

I WONDER WHAT'S WRONG?

DRAINED?

PURR MROW!

PURR MROW!

?

MAYBE HE'S SICK.

PURR MROW!

PURR MROW!

RIGHT. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO, SOICHI?

PURR MROW!

HA HA HA! QUIT YOUR FOOLING AROUND, SOICHI.

WHAT SHOULD WE PLAY NEXT, MR. YANAGIDA?

...

PURR MROW!

PURR MROW!

COME NOW! HA HA HA! GET DOWN.

WANT TO JOIN US?

OH, HEY! DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE!

I'LL BE BACK TOMORROW.

WELL THEN, THAT'S ALL FOR ME TODAY.

HM?

MR. YANAGI-DA!

MICHINA, WASN'T IT?

OH! IT'S YOU.

HE HAS A STRANGE POWER.

I'M SURE IT'S SOICHI.

I THINK YOU SHOULDN'T GET TOO INVOLVED WITH HIM.

...I DO LOOK A LITTLE DRAINED. I WONDER WHY.

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...

I'LL BE BLUNT— HE HASN'T CHANGED A BIT! HE HASN'T GOTTEN MORE CHEERFUL. HE JUST FEELS COMFORTABLE WITH YOU!

WITH THE *DRAINED* YOU!

I'M GETTING RESULTS WITH HIM.

BUT DON'T YOU THINK HE'S MORE CHEERFUL NOW?

I HATED EVERYTHING. OTHER PEOPLE. MY OWN SELF.

THE MISERY OF OTHERS WAS MY GREATEST JOY.

...THE TRUTH IS, WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I WAS INCREDIBLY CONTRARY.

YOU KNOW, I... I'M A TEACHER NOW, BUT...

I WANT TO HELP HIM.

I SEE MYSELF WHEN I LOOK AT SOICHI. I FEEL LIKE IT'S FATE THAT I BECAME HIS TEACHER.

BUT IN SIXTH GRADE, AN ENCOUNTER WITH A TEACHER CHANGED ME.

HE DIDN'T BACK DOWN FROM IT. HE KEPT AT ME AND MADE ME SEE THE LIGHT.

IF YOU'RE RIGHT AND HE HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL, THEN I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

...

BUT IF HE HAS AN UNTWISTED BONE LEFT IN HIS BODY, IT MIGHT BE HIS FEELINGS FOR YURIKO ANJO.

I THINK THERE'S BASICALLY NO HELPING HIM.

I FOUND A LOVE LETTER TO HER. IN HIS DIARY.

I THINK SHE'S IN HIS CLASS.

YURIKO ANJO?

I BELIEVE SHE'S IN CLASS THREE.

YURIKO ANJO...

OH! I'M SORRY. THAT'S NOT REALLY AN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION.

I COULDN'T HELP LAUGH-ING.

HE SPELLED OUT HIS FEELINGS FOR HER.

THIS IS ANJO.

THE NEXT DAY...

KLATTER KLATTER

I-I NEVER DREAMED HE'D BRING HER OVER.

THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT HER.

SOICHI, TALK WITH ANJO TODAY.

...

I'LL BE IN THE NEXT ROOM.

YOU'LL BE FINE. JUST TALK.

MR. YANAGI-DA!

OKAY, I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO ALONE.

WHAT ?!

KLAK

WHAT IS MR. YANAGIDA EVEN THINKING?

HEH... HEH HEH.

MY HAIR'S ALL MESSED UP.

W-WHOOPS.

...

FSH
FSH
FSH
FSH
PAT
PAT
FIDGET
FIDGET
FIDGET
FIDGET
FIDGET
FIDGET
FIDGET
FIDGET
PICK
PICK

...

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO ME?

YOU...

I'D NORMALLY NEVER COME SEE SOMEONE AS CREEPY AS YOU!

LISTEN. DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA. I CAME BECAUSE THE TEACHER ASKED ME TO.

I ONLY CAME BECAUSE HE SAID YOU WANTED TO TALK TO ME.

IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TALK, I'M LEAVING!

CHK

I'LL HATE YOU IF YOU CAUSE HIM ANY MORE PROBLEMS!

HE'S SO WORN-OUT, IT'S SAD.

OH! RIGHT! AND DON'T MAKE TROUBLE FOR HIM!

MR. YANAGIDA IS MY DREAM MAN.

EEEA-AAAH!

IT'LL BE FINE!

ARE YOU SURE IT'S OKAY TO LEAVE THEM ALONE TOGETHER?

ARE YOU OKAY?!

WHAT HAP-PENED ?!

HE SHOT A NAIL AT ME!

I JUST PULLED IT OUT!

AND IT STABBED ME!

AH!

KEE SHEE SHEE SHEE! RIGHT HERE! COME AND GET ME!

SOICHI! WHERE ARE YOU?!

KEE SHEE SHEE!

DON'T WANNA.

HEY! GET DOWN FROM THERE!

DAMMIT! HE RAN OFF INTO THE ATTIC.

I'LL GO.

SOICHI!

I'M FINE.

MR. YANAGIDA! YOU'LL GET HURT!

SHHH

COME TALK TO ME!

WHERE ARE YOU?

BOMPF

W-WHEN DID YOU...

I MADE IT. PRETTY GOOD, RIGHT?

IT'S A DOLL OF YOU.

THAT'S ...

VERY SOON NOW.

IT'S GOING TO START MOVING SOON.

MR. YANAGI-DA... THIS...

IT'S BEEN ABSORBING YOUR SOUL FOR A WHILE NOW.

YOUR *LIFE!*

YOUR HEALTHY SPIRIT OR WHATEVER IS FINDING A HOME IN THE DOLL.

W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

HA HA HA HA HA!

HA HA!

HEH HEH HEH ...

...

SHF

AH!

WHAT'RE THEY DOING? THEY'VE BEEN UP THERE A LONG TIME.

...

MR. YANAGI-DA!

KLATTER

SEE?

DON'T WORRY. HE'S COMING DOWN NOW.

SOICHI! WHERE'S MR. YANAGIDA?

CHK

SOICHI'S HOME VISIT/END

TEACHER OF CLOTH

ぬのせい きょうし

布製教師

6TH GRADE CLASS 1

CHAPTER

CHAPTER

FUKAZAWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

IT ALL STARTED ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE SECOND TERM.

AW MAN, SUMMER BREAK'S OVER.

HEY.

MORNING.

OKAY.

I ONLY GOT HALF THE MATH HOMEWORK DONE. SHOW ME YOURS? PLEASE?

OH, WAKAYAMA! I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!

MORN-ING!

MORNING, WAKAYAMA!

HEH HEH HEH! SORRY. I WILL.

DO YOUR OWN HOMEWORK SOMETIMES.

THANKS. OOH, NO WONDER YOU'RE THE CLASS REP! YOU DID ALL OF IT.

COME ON, KOTA.

SHFF

AH!

SHLL

THRK

CHK

I TOLD YOU TO QUIT SHOOTING NAILS AT ME!

SOICHI!

TCH!

I'M TELLING MR. YANAGIDA WHEN HE COMES.

ARE YOU TRYING TO HURT ME AGAIN? YOU NEED TO FIX YOUR PERSONALITY!

KLATTER

KLATTER

STAND!

HEY! TEACHER'S HERE!

JUST YOU WAIT, SOICHI!

PLEASE LISTEN!

MR. YANAGI-DA!

BOW!

SIT!

LATER

LATER

...SHOOT-ING...

SOICHI HERE IS...

MR. YANAGIDA?

...

BING
BONG

TUNK
TUNK

FWOO

TUNK
TUNK

KEH
KEH
KEH!

WWWWM

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? THAT'S DANGER-OUS!

SOICHI!

FWOo

HEY! YOU THERE!

DON'T HIDE. COME OUT NOW!

SHOOTING NAILS, IT'S JUST DANGERO—

HE STARTED IT.

WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING? EXPLAIN YOURSELF!

MR. YANAGIDA, IS THAT YOU?!

M—

EH... EH HEH HEH.

...

EEE HEE HEE. HOW ABOUT WE KEEP THIS JUST BETWEEN US?

IF IT ISN'T MS. AYAKO SOGA FROM FIFTH GRADE CLASS TWO.

TUNK

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS THE MR. YANAGI-DA I KNOW!

PLEASE BE SERIOUS! WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?

PLOK

HEH HEH.

OH NO!

...

WAH HA HA!

HA HA HA HA! SOICHI! YOU GOT ME!

TROT

MR. YANAGI-DA IS ACTING WEIRD.

...

WHAT *HAPPENED* TO HIM?

FWOO

BUT FOR SOME REASON, HE'S ENDED UP MORE LIKE SOICHI.

HE WAS SO WORKED UP ABOUT TURNING SOICHI INTO A DECENT PERSON BEFORE SUMMER BREAK.

WAH HA HA!

HIS FACE WAS WEIRD, TOO. LIKE, THERE WERE ALL THESE STRANGE WRINKLES, AND I COULD SEE, LIKE, SEAMS? AND HIS SKIN'S ALL ROUGH.

IT WAS KIND OF LIKE HE'S MADE OF CLOTH.

I SAW HIM UP CLOSE EARLIER.

IT'S UNNATU-RAL.

I MEAN, LOOK AT HIM MOVE.

CLOTH ?!

YES, THAT'S IT! HE LOOKS LIKE A STUFFED TOY.

AND CLASSES START TOMORROW. HOW'S THAT GOING TO GO?

MAYBE HE TURNED INTO A STUFFED TOY?

DON'T BE STUPID. STUFFED TOYS DON'T MOVE.

Edo Period
Third base
Black ships

Triangle
Madame
Curie

TO GET TO THE POINT.

AHEM.

6TH GRADE CLASS 1

SO THEN.

AND ALL THIS WORKS OUT INTO THIS!

THIS TURNS OUT LIKE THIS, AND THAT ENDS UP THAT.

UNDER-STAND?

THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE SCIENCE CLASS! SO WHY ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE EDO PERIOD?

NONE OF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING MAKES ANY SENSE AT ALL!

MR. YANAGIDA! I DON'T UNDER-STAND AT ALL!

M—

TH-THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS! PLEASE BE SERIOUS!

GO STAND IN THE HALL!

AFTER ALL I'VE SAID, YOU STILL DON'T GET IT? STUPID!

WHAT? CLASS REP KOSETSU WAKAYAMA.

WHAT? YOU'RE TALKING BACK?! FINE! GIVE ME A HUNDRED LAPS!

RIGHT NOW! GO!

SEE? THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T LISTEN!

...

KLATTER

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!
HAAH!

KOTA?

YOU'RE SUCH AN IDIOT. DID YOU REALLY DO A HUNDRED LAPS?

BONG

BING

HAAH!

KSH

BONG

BING

HAAH!

WAKA-YAMA, YOU'RE THE REP FOR CLASS ONE, RIGHT?

WHY ARE YOU ASKING, YURIKO ANJO?

UH. YEAH, I AM.

DO YOU KNOW SOME-THING?!

YOU MEAN MR. YANAGIDA, RIGHT? I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT HIM.

CLASS ONE'S TOUGH.

YOU'RE CLASS THREE, RIGHT? LUCKY YOU'RE NOT CLASS ONE.

TO SOICHI'S HOUSE?!

IN AUGUST, MR. YANAGIDA ASKED ME TO GO TO SOICHI'S HOUSE.

I DON'T KNOW IF I KNOW ANYTHING. BUT OVER SUMMER BREAK, OKAY?

I GUESS HE WORKED SO HARD WITH SOICHI, HE LOST WEIGHT.

HE WAS DESPERATELY CHASING AFTER SOICHI AT HIS HOUSE, TOO. THEN HE WENT UP INTO THE ATTIC.

WHEN HE CAME TO MY HOUSE, HE LOOKED REALLY DRAINED, TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM FIRST TERM.

HE SAID HE WANTED ME TO HELP SOICHI PULL HIMSELF TOGETHER.

HE WAS ACTING KIND OF WEIRD.

BUT...

...UNTIL HE FOLLOWED SOICHI OUT.

BUT HE TOOK FOREVER TO COME DOWN. WE WERE STARTING TO WORRY...

SHH!

SOMETHING HAPPENED IN THE ATTIC. I'M SURE SOICHI KNOWS WHAT.

I MEAN, THE REAL HIM WAS WAY SKINNIER. AND HE WAS WEARING A DIFFERENT SHIRT, TOO.

WAKAYAMA, THAT'S NOT MR. YANAGIDA. IT'S A FAKE.

HEH! CLASS REP DOING A HUNDRED LAPS!

IT'S SOICHI.

NO IDEA.

WHAT D'YOU MEAN?

SOICHI, WHAT DID YOU DO TO MR. YANAGIDA ?!

HEH HEH HEH! YOUR LEGS ARE ALL WOBBLY!

I SAID, STOP!

BLEH!

DON'T ACT ALL INNO-CENT!

AH! STOP!

GRAB

YANK

HEH HEH HEH! BYE!

BOING

...

YEAH. THE ATTIC! THE SECRET'S GOTTA BE IN HIS ATTIC.

SOICHI DEFINITELY KNOWS SOME-THING.

GROSS ...

LOOKS LIKE THE ELASTIC IN HIS SHORTS BROKE.

KEH KEH KEH.

KEH...

KEH KEH.

TH-THAT JERK WAKA-YAMA...

I'LL BRING YOU DOWN.

I'LL CURSE YOU.

THAT GUY'S FUTURE IS... DARK.

LOOKING AT MY BUTT IS A SERIOUS CRIME.

HOW DARE HE EXPOSE MY BUTT TO THE LIGHT OF DAY.

YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS, WAKAYAMA.

I KEEP SHAV-ING IT, AND IT KEEPS GROW-ING.

I DON'T KNOW. IT WAS THERE WHEN I WOKE UP.

HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

WAKAYAMA, WHAT'S WITH THE BEARD?!

HA HA HA! WE'RE CALLING YOU "GRAMPS" FROM NOW ON!

THIS IS NO JOKE. I'M STILL IN ELE-MENTARY SCHOOL.

I'M SERIOUSLY WORRIED HERE.

IT IS! KOSETSU WITH A BEARD'S SO SHARP.

BUT IT'S MAYBE KINDA HOT?

STAND!

元気よく あいさつ しましょう

KLATTER

SHH! IT'S YANAGIDA.

RIGHT NOW!

COME UP TO THE FRONT!

KOSETSU WAKA-YAMA!

BOW! SIT!

A MERE BOY DARING TO GROW A BEARD!

YOU SHAVE IT OFF RIGHT THIS SECOND!

TRYING TO REBEL...

THOSE DEFIANT EYES.

WHAT'S THIS?

SHF

SHF

EE SHEE SHEE!

WELL THEN, I'LL SHAVE IT FOR YOU.

KEH KEH.

WAKAYAMA! WATCH OUT!

SHF

SHF

SHF

WHY ARE YOU RUN-NING AWAY?

SHF

HNGAAH !

THUD

SLICE

MR. YANAGIDA IS ANGRY.

WAKA-YAMA.

HMPH

TNK

TNK

YOU'RE A CLOTH FAKE!

YOU'RE NOT MR. YANAGI-DA!

FWOO

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU STAY RIGHT THERE, KEEP STILL.

IF YOU MOVE, YOU'LL GET CUT.

SNICK-ER.

SNICKER.

THIS IS FOR REAL!

HEY, SOICHI! STOP HIM!

NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.

WHOA.

DON'T MOVE. STAY RIGHT THERE.

THAT'S AN ORDER FROM YANAGIDA.

FISH

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

MR. YANAGI-DA!

IF IT ISN'T MS. AYAKO SOGA!

OH, HEY.

MR. YANAGIDA, THE PRINCIPAL WANTS TO SEE YOU.

PLEASE GO TO HIS OFFICE RIGHT NOW.

HEH HEH HEH. I WONDER WHAT THE PRIN-CIPAL WANTS.

MAYBE HE'S GIVING ME A BONUS.

MS. SOGA, LET'S NOT TELL THE PRINCIPAL ABOUT THIS.

WAKA-YAMA, ARE YOU OKAY?

YES. IT'S JUST A SCRATCH.

OH MY. A BEARD ...

PLEASE SHUT IT AWAY IN YOUR HEART. ALL RIGHT, THEN.

WHAT ?!

MR. YANAGI-DA'S FINGER.

WHAT'S THIS?

WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON?

I *KNEW* IT. THAT REALLY IS A CLOTH FAKE OF MR. YANAGIDA.

IS THIS... FAB-RIC? IT LOOKS KNIT-TED.

HE CUT IT OFF HIMSELF A MINUTE AGO.

HUH ?!

KOTA! WHERE'S SOICHI?

HE RAN OFF!

AH! HE...

SOICHI!

YOU'RE STILL NEW. I KNOW IT MUST BE HARD TO SUDDENLY BE IN CHARGE OF A SIXTH GRADE CLASS.

SO WHAT HAP-PENED?

BUT YOU DID GREAT WORK IN THE FIRST TERM.

I CALLED YOU IN BECAUSE I WANTED TO HEAR YOUR SIDE OF THE STORY.

PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

YANAGI-DA, LATE-LY...

...I'VE BEEN HEARING UNPLEAS-ANT RUMORS.

GRAB

PRINCI-PAL!

HRRNGH!

YOU'LL NEVER LAST AS A TEACHER IF YOU DON'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY!

I WAS WORKING SO HARD EARLIER, I LOST A FINGER!

L-LET GO...

NO TEACHER IS MORE PASSIONATE THAN I AM!

G-GET HIM OFF ME!

I CAN'T BREATHE!

PRINCIPAL! WHAT'S WRONG?

S-SOMEONE! GET IN HERE!

PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

EE HEE HEE HEE HEE!

HEY! DON'T!

EE HEE HEE!

KOLL KOLL KOLL

AH! STOP!

EE HEE!

HA HA HA!

EE HEE HEE!

SO THAT STUFFED DOLL JUST RAN OFF?

YEAH. EVERY-ONE'S FREAK-ING OUT.

DON'T SAY THAT!

DID HE DIE UP THERE?

GUESS-ING FROM WHAT ANJO SAID, HE'S STILL IN THE ATTIC.

BUT, LIKE, IF THAT ONE'S A FAKE, THEN WHERE'D THE REAL MR. YANAGIDA GO?

DID SHE REALLY SAY TODAY?

IT'S ALREADY EVE-NING.

SOGA

MS. SOGA IS SURE LATE GETTING HOME.

MAYBE SHE'S BUSY WITH SCHOOL STUFF?

I'M SURE OF IT. MS. SOGA HERSELF SAID FOR US TO MEET AT HER APARTMENT TODAY AT FOUR.

WELL... MAYBE WE CAN TRY TO GET MS. SOGA ON OUR SIDE TOMORROW?

SHE'S NOT INSIDE, EITHER.

CHAK CHAK CHAK

WELL, WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING UNTIL SHE GETS HERE.

TAK TAK

TAK TAK TAK

TAK

TAK

WAS THAT MS. SOGA JUST NOW?

I DUNNO. IT'S TOO DARK TO TELL.

OH! MUST BE. THE SOUND'S COMING THIS WAY.

TAK

TAK

TAK

THAT'S NOT MS. SOGA! LOOK!

KOTA, WAIT!

AAAH!

GUU.

GUU.

FWUP

NOW MS. SOGA'S BEEN TURNED INTO A CLOTH DOLL!

AAAH !

GUU.

GUU.

RUN!

C'MON !

GUU.

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

KLAK

GUU.

GUU.

HAAH !

HAAH!

GUU.

AAAH
!

GUU.

KSSH KSSH

AAH!

GUUU-
UUU!

GUU-
UUU!

GUU.

HNGH!

SZAP

WHAP

GAH!

WHAP

GUU!

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

GUU!

UNLOCK

UNLOCK

NRRK!

FWWOM

AUUGH!

BOOSPF

AAAH!

PHEW ...

EEE-EEE!

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

HMM. GOOD QUES-TION.

SO? WHAT D'WE DO NOW, WAKAYAMA?

UH-HUH.

THIS IS SOICHI'S HOUSE?

OH HEY?

HUH?

WHAT? YOU THINK THEY'D LET US?

WE COULD ASK THEM TO LET US LOOK IN THE ATTIC?

KROK

KLATTER

SOME-THING'S MOVING.

THERE.

IT'S SOICHI.

PLAP PLAP

SLIDE SLIDE THUMP

YOU WAIT HERE, YURIKO ANJO.

THERE'S A LADDER THERE.

ARE YOU SURE?

I BET THAT GOES TO THE ATTIC.

WE GO. THIS IS OUR CHANCE.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

TONK

QUIET. WE DON'T WANT HIS FAMILY TO HEAR US.

KLATTER

KOTA, GIVE ME YOUR PENLIGHT.

MAYBE MR. YANAGI-DA'S HERE.

AND MS. SOGA ?

HMM. I CAN'T REALLY SEE ANYTHING.

SO HOW'S IT LOOK?

RIGHT. THE REAL MS. SOGA'S PROBABLY ALSO MISSING.

AH! HEY, SOMEONE'S HERE.

IS THAT YOU...

...MR. YANAGIDA?

HUH?

A GHOST!

AAAH!

IT'S JUST A STUFFED TOY. HALF-FINISHED.

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU, WAKA-YAMA.

DON'T MOVE.

...

BUT HOW COME THE DOLLS MOVE?

IS THERE SOMEONE INSIDE THEM?

I DON'T THINK SO. THE MOVEMENT'S TOO UNNATURAL FOR A PERSON.

SOICHI MADE THOSE CLOTH TEACHERS AND REPLACED THE REAL TEACHERS.

YEAH. I THINK I GET IT NOW.

ANYWAY, SEEMS LIKE HE'S PLANNING TO LET LOOSE WITH A FAKE ME.

I'M CURIOUS WHAT HAPPENS TO ME WHEN THIS STARTS MOVING.

I MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO MR. YANAGIDA AND MS. SOGA.

WHY?

YEAH? THEN WE PULL IT APART BEFORE HE CAN FINISH IT!

NO! STOP! WE LET HIM FINISH IT.

LET'S GO HOME FOR NOW.

NO WAY. LIKE I'D DIE!

WHAT IF YOU DIE?

BUT... YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'LL DO TO YOU!

IF I LOSE CONTROL, THOUGH, KOTA, YOU TAKE ME OUT, OKAY?

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

AH!

HUH?

YOU'RE SOICHI'S BROTHER.

I'M SORRY. WE ACTUALLY HAVE A REASON.

YOU'RE JUST KIDS?

A REASON?

OH. YOU.

YOU'RE FROM SOICHI'S SCHOOL, RIGHT?

HMM. WELL, YURIKO'S NOT WRONG.

SO THAT'S BASICALLY IT. WE THOUGHT MAYBE THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE ATTIC.

I WAS BAFFLED BY THE CHANGE IN MR. YANAGIDA THEN, TOO.

FIRST OFF, COULD SOICHI EVEN MAKE A THING LIKE THAT?

IF YOU'RE RIGHT, THEN WE'RE TALKING ROBOTS. AND I KNOW TECHNOL-OGY HAS COME A LONG WAY, BUT THAT'S SCIENCE FICTION.

...I'D HAVE TO SAY, HOLD IT RIGHT THERE.

BUT IF YOU'RE TRYING TO TELL ME HE'S A FAKE, A DOLL BEING MADE TO MOVE...

MAYBE THEY'RE NOT ROBOTS. MAYBE THE SPIRIT OF THE PERSON GOT TRANSFERRED INTO THEM.

KOTA!

BUT THERE'S ACTUALLY... A DOLL IN THE ATTIC RIGHT NOW.

SHAVE THAT BEARD.

BE CAREFUL!

AT ANY RATE, IT'S NOT SAFE FOR KIDS TO BE OUT THIS LATE AT NIGHT.

I'LL LET YOU OFF THIS TIME. HURRY ON HOME NOW.

I DON'T BELIEVE IN STUFF LIKE THAT.

THE NEXT DAY...

FUKAZAWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

WHAT IS THAT ?!

TAK

TAK

TAK

TAK

GUU.

GUU.

SO I'LL BE TAKING OVER FOR HIM FOR NOW.

YOUR HOMEROOM TEACHER, MR. YANAGIDA, IS ABSENT.

6TH GRADE CLASS 1

MAYBE IT'S A COLD.

IT'S LIKE, I FEEL SO WEAK.

YEAH.

HEY, WAKA-YAMA! WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK DOWN.

YAAH YAAH

SOICHI'S NOT HERE TODAY. IT'S NOT WEIRD FOR HIM TO SKIP SCHOOL, BUT...

AAH! AAH!

HEY, WAKA-YAMA! SOME-THING'S GOING ON OUTSIDE.

EEEE!

GUU.

GAH!

AH! LOOK AT THAT!

GUUU-UUU!

HER FACE IS BURNED.

IT'S THE SOGA FROM LAST NIGHT.

YEAH!

C'MON! LET'S GO!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!

KLATTER

AH! HEY!

DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE ME! GUU!

WHAP

YOU'RE FIN-ISHED.

HEH HEH HEH! STUPID WAKAYAMA!

SHF

YOUR JOB IS...

...TO GO TO SCHOOL IN YOUR BIRTHDAY SUIT AND RUN A HUNDRED LAPS.

STARTING TODAY, *YOU'RE* THE REAL KOSETSU WAKAYAMA.

BANG

BANG

THRK

YOU'LL PAY FOR EXPOSING MY BUTT.

LA LA!

GULP
SOICHI!
YOU SCARED ME.
W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP HERE?
WHAT IS THAT DOLL?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
AH! ARE YOU TRYING TO RUN AWAY? SOICHI!
HEH! SINCE LAST NIGHT? YOU MUST BE TIRED.
WHAT IS THAT DOLL? EXPLAIN YOUR-SELF!
I'VE BEEN HIDING IN HERE SINCE LAST NIGHT. TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO.

BOING

KLATTER

HE'S ALWAYS GETTING IN MY WAY.

KEH KEH. DAMN THAT STUPID KOICHI!

THUD

FWP

W-WHAT THE?!

AAAAAH!

HA HA!

BOING

TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
HRNk
FWUMP
I DID IT!!
HEH HEH HEH!
EEE!
AAH!
KEH KEH KEH. THIS IS QUITE THE SIGHT.
I MEAN, A DOLL MOVING?
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
TMP TMP TMP TMP

DARN!

I MISSED.

SHF

CLANG

?

I'M BUSY. GO AWAY.

OH, IT'S YOU, YANAGI-DA.

LET'S PLAY NAILS AGAIN.

HEY, SOICHI.

...

WAKAYAMA'S MORE INTERESTING RIGHT NOW.

SHF

FWOO

YOU LOOK SUPER DRAINED!

HEY! WHAT'S WRONG, WAKAYAMA ?!

HRNGH

WHOA!

EEEA-AAH!

I-I'M SO WEAK...

EEE!

AH!

BWWM

BWWM

DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE ME! GUU!

GUU-UUU!

GUU!

WHAT ?!

I'M SURE IT'S MY SOUL BEING SUCKED INTO THE DOLL IN THE ATTIC.

HANG ON!

WAKA-YAMA!

KLAK KLAK

NOW! GRAB HER. THIS IS OUR CHANCE.

BOYS. YOU REALLY GOT ME LAST NIGHT, HM?

AAH!

BWWM

WHIRL

GAH!

WHAP

AAAH!

YOU'LL PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID TO MY FACE. I'M COMING FOR YOU!

ESPE-CIALLY LITTLE BEARDY THERE.

BWWWW

GUU!

WAH HA HA! HOW'S IT FEEL?!

WAH HA HA! TAKE THAT!

WHAP

WHAP

HYAH!

WHAP

AH!

TMP

TMP

SMACK

GRAB

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

RIP

YOU BURNED MY FACE!

IT WAS YOU!

RIP

BONK

RIP

RIP

KUNK

HAAH! HAAH!

HA HA HA HA! WAIT UP, SOICHI!

HAAH HAAH!

HA HA HA!

WAH HA HA! I GOT YOU! DIRECT HIT!

BOING

FWOO

EEAAH!

THWK

NGAAAH!

WHOA!

AH!

HA HA HA! WAIT UP!

KZAY

GAAAH! LET GO OF ME!

LET GO!

GUU
...

GUUU!

...

193

WHAT IS EVEN HAPPENING?

CHATTER CHATTER

WRIGGLE WRIGGLE

I'M BACK TO MY OLD SELF, TOO.

AND THE BEARD'S GONE.

MR. YANAGIDA AND MS. SOGA WERE BOTH RESCUED THAT SAME DAY.

AND SO THE BIZARRE INCIDENT THAT STARTED WITH THE SECOND TERM ENDED.

AS FOR SOICHI, HE BECAME VERY QUIET AFTER THAT.

ALTHOUGH WE CAN NEVER KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING IN THE SHADOWS.

MS. SOGA HAD COLLAPSED IN HER APARTMENT, WHILE MR. YANAGIDA WAS FOUND ABSENTLY SITTING BY A BONFIRE IN THE PARK.

SOICHI'S BIRTHDAY

双一の誕生日

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

MAY 3, THE MIDDLE OF THE GOLDEN WEEK HOLIDAY...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

...MICHINAAAA!

YAY!

CLAP CLAP

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

FWOO!

MY PLEASURE! GO AHEAD AND STUFF YOURSELF.

AND AUNTIE, YOU EVEN MADE ME A CAKE.

THANKS, KOICHI. THANKS, SAYURI.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MICHI!

BUT WE NEVER DREAMED YOU'D THROW ME A PARTY! RIGHT, YUSUKE?

YEAH!

IT'S PERFECT TIMING WITH YOU BOTH HERE FOR GOLDEN WEEK.

HA HA HA HA!

WOULD YOU STOP THAT, KOICHI? YOU'RE NOT EVEN OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL YET.

HA HA HA!

I KIND OF HATE MY BIRTHDAY NOW.

YOU'RE STILL AN AGE WHERE YOUR BIRTHDAY MAKES YOU HAPPY.

IT'S LIKE, AAH, ANOTHER YEAR OLDER.

AH!

WHAT FUN YOU'RE HAVING.

HA HA HA HA HA

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? THAT'S GROSS.

HEY, SOICHI!

AH!

THRK

Happy Birthday

FWOO

HMM. SHE DID?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, JERK? IT'S MICHI'S BIRTHDAY PARTY. SHE BLEW THE CANDLES OUT.

WHO COULD HAVE DONE THAT?

HUH? THE CANDLES ARE ALREADY OUT?

WAIT. ISN'T TODAY SOICHI'S BIRTHDAY TOO?

HUH?

UH...

THAT'S AN AMAZ-ING COINCI-DENCE.

THEN, SOICHI AND MICHINA WERE BORN ON THE SAME DAY A YEAR APART.

CHK CHK

YES. ACTUALLY, IT *IS* SOICHI'S BIRTHDAY.

HE'S ALWAYS SAYING HE WAS BORN ON JUNE 6, AT 6:06, 6.66 SECONDS, SO I JUST STARTED BELIEVING IT.

OH. RIGHT.

NO WAY. THAT MAKES ME FEEL KIND OF ICKY.

HURRY AND COME DOWN, SOICHI.

HMPH. NO THANKS.

OKAY, COME DOWN THEN, SOICHI. IT CAN BE YOUR PARTY, TOO.

I KNOW YOU LIKE CAKE. COME EAT THE PART WITH THE NAIL.

A BIRTHDAY PARTY, YOU SAY? HMPH.

I'D RATHER CELEBRATE THE ANNI-VERSARY OF MICHINA'S DEATH.

CURSES.

NGH.

AND THERE HE GOES. FORGET HIM. LET'S JUST HAVE FUN OURSELVES.

...ENDS HERE.

YOUR FUN...

HA HA HA HA HA

BAM BAM

QUIT IT!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, SOICHI ?!

BAM BAM

AH!

BAM

SOICHI!

STOP THAT!

BAM BAM

BAM

AH! DUST IS...

SSH SSH

SSH

SAYURI, YOU BRING THE GLASSES.

SSH SSH

WE'LL HAVE TO GO TO A DIFFERENT ROOM.

THAT BRAT! HE'S TRYING TO HARASS US.

BAM BAM

KRK

TMP TMP

I'M SO SICK OF THIS!

AH!

THUD

AAH!

MWAH HA HA HA!

KLATTER

HE LANDED IN IT...

KOICHI, ARE YOU OKAY? HERE'S A HAND-KERCHIEF.

TOO BAD, YOU WENT AND RUINED THE PRECIOUS CAKE.

YOU BREAK IT, YOU BOUGHT IT!

THAT'S WHAT YOU GET!

CARELESS KOICHI FELL FACE-FIRST INTO THE CAKE.

I MANAGED TO STOP MYSELF IN THE NICK OF TIME.

I PUT THOSE MUSCLES TO WORK.

WOW!

SAFE!

HUH?

HNNNGH...

HA HA HA HA!

THAT'S GREAT!

HOW IS THAT A SAVE, YOU COWARD?

HA HA HA!

OKAY, LET'S GO EAT IT IN ANOTHER ROOM.

A FOOT? WHOSE FOOT?

BUT WHAT DID I TRIP ON BACK THERE?

GRAND-PA'S OUT ON A WALK.

THE THING IS...

I FEEL LIKE IT WAS A FOOT...

WELL, WHATEVER. LET'S EAT THIS CAKE. WE'LL EAT SOICHI'S PIECE, TOO.

I THOUGHT I SAW A FOOT, BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN MY EYES PLAYING TRICKS.

...I CHECKED INSIDE THAT ROOM, AND THERE WAS NO ONE THERE.

HE HASN'T SHOWN HIMSELF AGAIN. MAYBE HE GAVE UP.

HE'S ALWAYS UP TO SOMETHING, AND IF YOU TRY TO GET HIM TO JOIN YOU, HE TURNS YOU DOWN. BUT IF YOU IGNORE HIM, HE HOLDS A GRUDGE.

WHO KNOWS? HE MIGHT BE PLANNING SOMETHING ELSE. AT ANY RATE, THAT KID'S A HANDFUL.

NO ONE WITH THAT PERSON-ALITY.

IT'S WEIRD, THOUGH. I WONDER WHO HE TAKES AFTER. THERE'S NO ONE LIKE HIM IN YOUR FAMILY.

I THINK IT'S A REAL MYSTERY THAT ONLY SOICHI TURNED OUT LIKE THAT.

YOUR DAD'S GREAT, TOO. AND GRANDPA'S SO MUCH FUN.

YOU AND SAYURI ARE BOTH SO CHEERFUL. AND AUNTIE'S SO KIND.

...

WHOA, MICHINA. THAT'S GOING TOO FAR.

...HE TAKES AFTER GRANDMA.

YEAH. I'M SURE...

OH, RIGHT.

SHE'S GONE NOW, THOUGH.

I'LL GET A PICTURE. HANG ON.

YOU MEAN OUR GREAT-AUNT...THE WOMAN WHO MARRIED OUR GRANDMA'S OLDER BROTHER?

YOUR GRANDMA?

THIS IS FROM... ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO, I GUESS.

THE BABY'S SOICHI, RIGHT?

THEY EVEN LOOK ALIKE.

BINGO.

THIS IS YOUR GRANDMA?

HER POSE IS KIND OF WEIRD. LIKE SHE'S HOLDING SOMETHING.

THIS IS ACTUALLY CONNECTED WITH SOICHI'S BIRTHDAY.

WELL, I GUESS IF I'VE ALREADY STARTED, I SHOULD FINISH.

WANNA HEAR IT?

IT'S A STRANGE STORY.

YEAH. THAT'S RIGHT. SO ABOUT THAT.

HER "PROPH-ECIES" WERE ALMOST NEVER RIGHT, THOUGH.

SHE JUST BELIEVED SHE WAS A PROPHET.

GRANDMA WAS KNOWN AS A BIT OF A WEIRDO.

PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD WERE SCARED OF HER, CALLED HER "OLD LADY PROPHET."

A THIRD CHILD... IT'S A LOT OF RESPON-SIBILITY.

I WILL, FATHER.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF.

WHEN I WAS THREE, OUR MOM WAS PREGNANT WITH HER THIRD KID.

HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE DOING ALL THE HOUSEWORK FROM NOW ON, SHUJI.

SO YOU COME AT ME WITH "MOTHER."

HMPH.

OH MY... MOTHER.

HAVING FUN?

SHK

NOT OMINOUS. IT'S THE TRUTH. THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT.

COME NOW, SASHIE! DON'T SAY SUCH OMINOUS THINGS.

YOUR THIRD CHILD WILL BE A MISCARRIAGE.

SHK

MISAKO. I HAVE A TERRIBLE ANNOUNCE-MENT.

HEE HEE HEE. OH MY? MISAKO, YOU'RE GOING UP THE STAIRS, HM?

ACCORDING TO MY VISION, IT'S BECAUSE MISAKO FALLS DOWN THE STAIRS IN HER FOURTH MONTH.

AND TO TWINS. A HAPPY OCCASION. THEY'LL BE BORN IN JUNE. JUNE 6 AT SIX IN THE MORNING.

YOU'LL GIVE BIRTH.

BUT THEN, WHEN NOTHING HAPPENED IN THE FOURTH MONTH AND EVERYTHING WAS GOING GREAT AT THE SEVENTH, SHE STARTED SAYING...

THEY'LL BE CUTE DEMON CHILDREN. WHAT A DELIGHT, HM?

THESE CHILDREN BORN JUNE 6 AT SIX IN THE MORNING. THEY'LL BE DEMON CHILDREN.

EEE SHEE SHEE!

LISTEN. THIS TIME, I'M RIGHT.

BUT IN FACT, A SINGLE NOT PARTICU-LARLY CUTE CHILD WAS BORN THE NEXT DAY, MAY 3, AFTER SIX IN THE EVENING.

JUST GOT THE WRONG IDEA IS ALL. I COUNTED AN EXTRA MONTH FROM MAY 5 AT FIVE IN THE MORNING.

BUT WHEN MOM WENT INTO LABOR ON MAY 2...

WAAAH!

WAAAH!

IT'S DEFI-NITELY TWINS.

QUIET!

MOM. QUIT THAT. IT'S NOT TWINS.

SEE? ADOR-ABLE TWINS.

WAAH! WAAAH!

'CAUSE THEY'RE TWINS!

THAT'S RIGHT. NAME'S SETTLED! THE OLDER ONE'S SOICHI, YOUNGER'S SOJI!

CAN YOU SEE HIM? LITTLE SOJI?!

SOJI?!

WAAAH!

COME HERE, SOJI.

GRANDMA KEPT INSISTING IT WAS TWINS AND SET UP TWO BEDS.

OH, OH! LOOK AT YOU!

BAH BAH BAH BAH!

YOU SWEET BOY!

THERE WE GO! A DOLL FOR SOJI!

BAH BAH BAH!

AND SHE USED TO HATE CHILDREN.

BAH BAH BAH

HONESTLY, I CAN'T BELIEVE HER.

HMPH. YOU'RE ACTING SELFISH, SAYURI.

IT'S FINE. IT'S NOT LIKE THE DOLL'S GONE.

SHK

WAAAAH! GIMME MY DOLL BAAAACK!

DON'T SAY THAT, KOICHI.

MOM, I HATE GRANDMA.

SAYURI, COME OVER HERE.

WAAAAH!

GOO.

GOO.

GAM GAM! GAM GAM!

OOOH! YOU LIKE GRANDMA BETTER, DO YOU, SOICHI?

SOICHI GOT OLDER—ONE YEAR OLD, TWO—AND HE LOOKED MORE AND MORE LIKE GRANDMA.

...

ACCORDING TO MY PROPHECY, YOU'RE A GENIUS.

SHK

WHEE! WHEE!

AAAH! YOU TURNED OUT JUST RIIIIGHT!

SHE'S GONNA BUY ME AN AMAZING ROBOT.

I'M GOING TO THE STORE WITH GRANDMA.

GRANDMA SPOILED HIM SENSELESS, SO HE WAS ALREADY A BRAT BY THE TIME HE TURNED THREE.

HEEEY, KOICHI!

OKAY, OKAY, SOICHI, SOJI.

COME ON, GRAND-MA!

HUMPH.

WE'RE GONNA GET A HUGE CAKE AND EAT IT. AND WE'RE NOT GIVING YOU NONE!

'CAUSE IT'S ME AND SOJI'S THIRD BIRTHDAY!

SHEEEEE!

SOICHI REALLY BELIEVED HE HAD A TWIN BROTHER BACK THEN.

HEY, SOJI. YOU WANNA TRADE ROBOTS?

BLEH! GRANDMA DOES IT ALL THE TIME.

SOICHI! YOU STOP RIGHT NOW! IT'S DANGEROUS TO RUN WITH A TOOTHPICK IN YOUR MOUTH!

IT WAS ON SOICHI'S FOURTH BIRTHDAY.

MAYBE SHE'D GOTTEN A BIT SENILE. SHE WENT OUT AND JUST NEVER CAME BACK.

BASICALLY... SHE WENT MISSING.

AND THIS GRANDMA SOICHI ADORED...

...NO ONE KNOWS IF SHE'S ALIVE OR DEAD.

WHERE SHOULD WE GO TODAY, SOJI?

WHEN SHE LEFT, SHE TOLD GRANDPA SHE WAS GOING FOR A WALK WITH SOJI.

...

A COUPLE DAYS LATER, SOMEONE SAID THEY SAW AN OLD LADY WITH A KID. BUT SHE COULDN'T HAVE HAD A KID WITH HER, SO IT WAS PROBABLY SOMEONE ELSE.

EVERYONE WENT LOOKING FOR HER, BUT THEY COULDN'T FIND HER.

WELL... THAT'S THE STORY, BASI-CALLY.

SNRR.

SNRR.

OKAY.

IN THE CLOSET IN THE NEXT ROOM. WOULD YOU MIND?

I'LL GO GET ONE. WHERE DO YOU KEEP THEM?

GRANDPA'S NAPPING, HM? WE SHOULD TOSS A BLANKET OVER HIM.

SLIDE

AH!

SUCH A POOR UP-BRINGING.

DON'T YOU KNOCK?

Y-YOU SCARED ME...

BLANKETS ARE ON THAT SIDE.

HEY, ARE THE BLAN-KETS IN HERE?

I'M NOT GOING TO KNOCK EVERY TIME I OPEN A CLOSET.

KLATTER

OH, YEAH?

AH!

THANKS.

WHO'RE YOU? KNOCK WHEN YOU OPEN THE CLOSET!

GLARE

Y-YOU HAVE TO COME!

WHAT'S WRONG ?!

TMP TMP TMP

AAAAH! AUNTIEEEE!

SHE COULDN'T HAVE ACTUALLY COME HOME.

IMPOS-SIBLE.

THERE'S NO ONE HERE.

I'M SURE I SAW HER—YOUR GRANDMA.

SO WE DECIDED I WAS SEEING THINGS BECAUSE OF THE STORY I'D JUST HEARD.

WE LOOKED ALL OVER AND COULDN'T FIND HER.

SORRY FOR HAVING THE SAME BIRTHDAY.

DOA

GAH!

NAH. IT'S OKAY.

SORRY, MICHI. TELLING YOU ALL THAT...AND ON YOUR BIRTHDAY.

AND AS HIS OLDER BROTHER, I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE FOR SOICHI'S BIRTHDAY BEING THE SAME AS YOURS.

KEH KEH KEH!

HEY, MICHINA. CHEER UP. YOU WEREN'T HALLUCI-NATING.

HMPH.

YOU JERK! DON'T POP OUT OF NOWHERE!

GRANDMA AND SOJI BOTH HATE YOU. SO WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY'LL DO TO YOU?

BE CAREFUL NEXT TIME YOU SEE HER, MICHINA.

EVERY YEAR ON MY BIRTHDAY, GRANDMA AND SOJI SHOW UP LOOKING THE SAME AS BACK THEN.

AND WE HAVE OUR OWN BIRTHDAY PARTY TOGETHER.

IT'S TONIGHT ...

HE GOT LEFT OUT OF THE PARTY, SO HE'S JUST BEING MEAN.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, MICHI.

YOU KNOW, THE BEST TIMES FOR SOICHI WERE MAYBE WHEN GRANDMA WAS HERE.

...

KEE SHEE SHEE SHEE!

MWAH HA HA!

MWAH!

THAT NIGHT, I COULDN'T GET TO SLEEP.

YUSUKE!

YU-SUKE.

CREAK

CREAK

KEE SHEE SHEE SHEE SHEE.

THAT'S SOICHI.

WHAT IS HE DOING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?

COME ALONG, SOJI.

GOOD. YOU JUST WAIT. GRANDMA'LL TAKE CARE OF HER.

SOICHI. WHERE'S MICHINA'S ROOM?

AH!

UP THE STAIRS, SECOND ON THE RIGHT, GRANDMA.

CREAK

CREAK

CREAK

CREAK

CREAK

CREAK

WAKE UP!

YU-SUKE!

IT'S THIS ROOM!

AAAAAH!

GRAB

AAA-
AAAH!

YOU'LL TAKE YOUR MEDICINE TONIGHT.

SCREAM ALL YOU WANT, BUT NO ONE'S WAKING UP.

SO THIS IS WHERE YOU WERE HIDING!

AAAH!

LET GO!

THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR HAVING A PARTY WITHOUT ME.

KEH KEH KEH! LOOKS LIKE TOTAL VICTORY FOR LORD ME.

MAYBE I'LL HIT THE HAY.

AAAH!

NOW THEN... IT'S PRETTY LATE.

AAAAA-
AAAAAH!

THERE WE GO!

HAVEN'T BEEN IN HERE IN A WHILE.

SHE

OOH ...

CREAK

CREAK

YOU MISS ME THAT MUCH, HM?

MY BED'S CALLING TO ME.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! FROM MICHINA

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

MM?

AAAAAH! YUSUKE! WAKE UP! HELP!

BWAH HA HA HA! I'LL PLUCK THAT HEAD RIGHT OFF!

AAAAH!

WE'LL PICKLE IT IN SHOCHU!

RATH-ER!

GRANDMA, LET'S TURN HER INTO A SHRUNKEN HEAD!

WAH HA HA HA!

BWAH HA HA HA!

HAH!

MNCH MNCH.

MNCH. WHAT A TERRIBLE CAKE. DISGUSTING. MNCH MNCH.

MNCH MNCH.

WHAT HAP-PENED?

THEY'RE GONE.

BANG

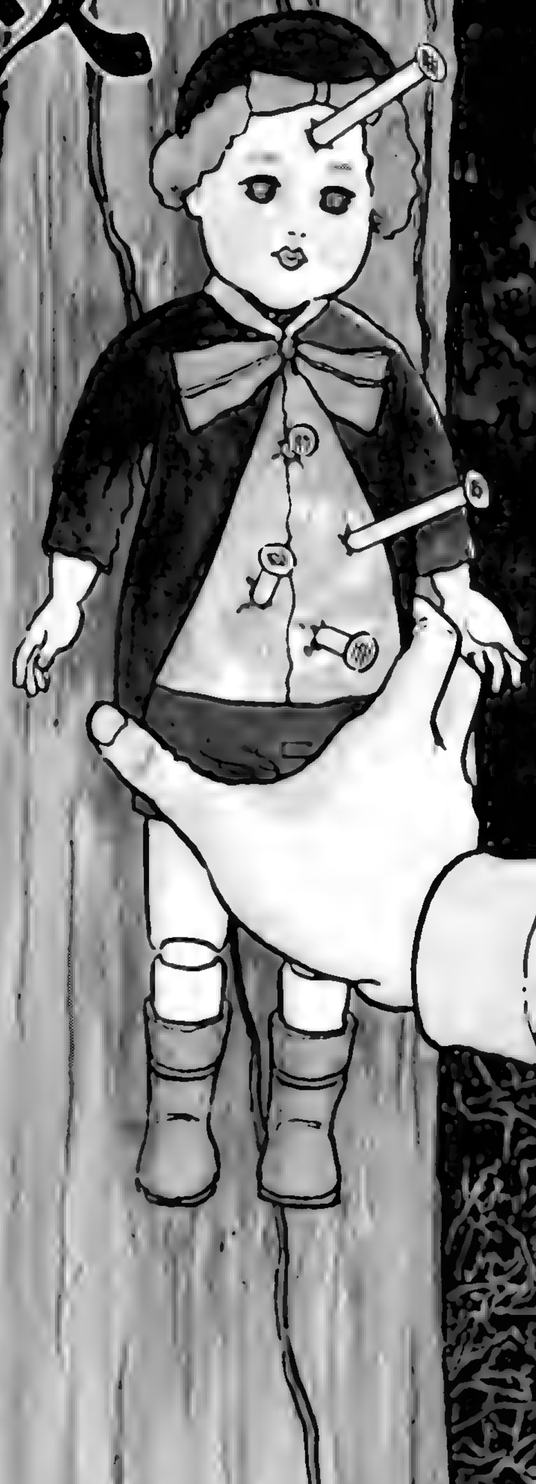
HA HA HA HA HA!

BANG

HEH HEH HEH HEH!

HA HA HA HA!

SOICHI'S 双一の PETTY CURSES 勝手な呪い



EH HEH HEH!
EEE HEE HEE!

BANG

MY STOMACH!

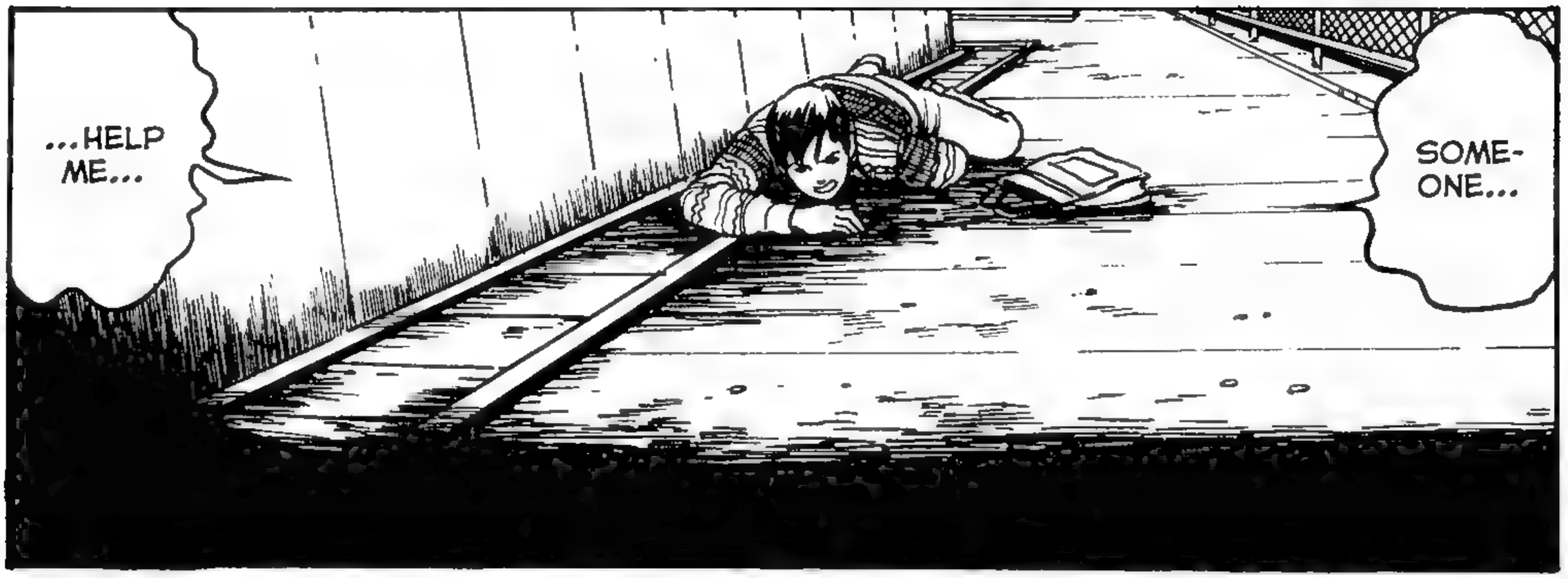
UNH! OW OW OW!

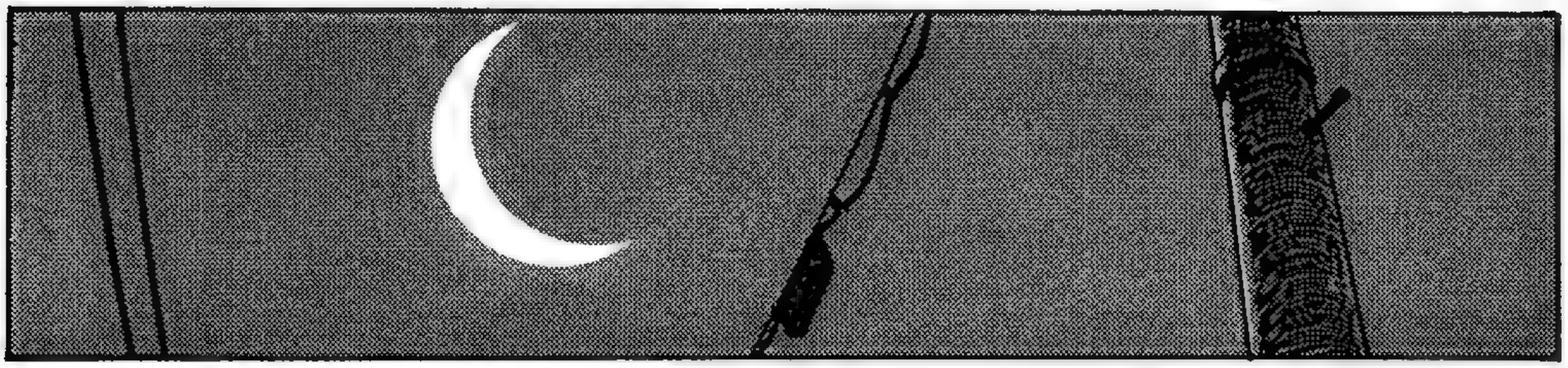
SOME-ONE...

UNH...

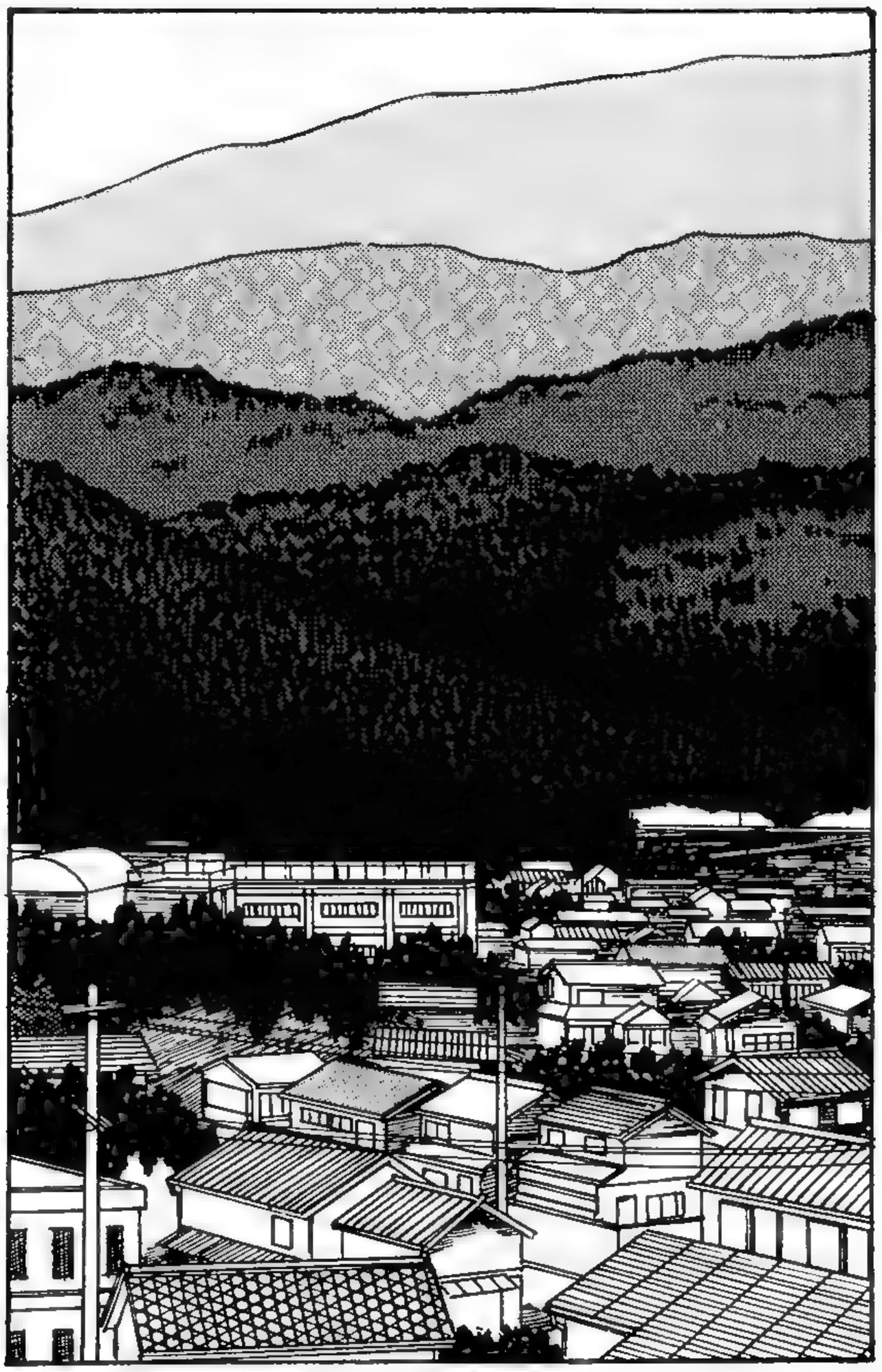
HELP!

HELP!


...HELP ME...
SOME-ONE...



SERI-OUSLY. THERE'S NO ONE AS AMAZING AS ME.
FUKAZAWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



HOW IS IT I'M SO INCRED-IBLE?

6TH GRADE CLASS 1

NOWHERE IN THE WHOLE WORLD IS THERE ANYONE BETTER THAN ME.

CONCEALED WITHIN ME IS UNFATHOMABLE, SUPERHUMAN POWER. HEH HEH HEH.

I'M NO ORDINARY HUMAN BEING.

AH, YES, ME.

LAST NIGHT, OYA FROM CLASS 3 COLLAPSED ON THE ROAD!

WHAT ?!

HEY, DID YOU HEAR?

PLUS, I'M GOOD-LOOKING.

MY FACE IS UNEXCEP-TIONAL.

CAN'T HAVE ANYONE COMPARING ME TO ALL THESE MEDIOCRE PEOPLE.

WOW. I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED. YOU THINK HE'S OKAY?

I GUESS HE'S IN THE HOSPITAL NOW.

HIS STOMACH STARTED HURTING ON HIS WAY HOME FROM CRAM SCHOOL.

HEH HEH HEH.

WHAT COULD'VE HAPPENED TO HIM, HM?

WOOOOW. IS THAT SO? OYA GOT SICK LAST NIGHT, *HUH?*

AND HE'S MUTTERING TO HIMSELF AGAIN.

HEY, I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE SOICHI WAS IN HERE. HE'S LIKE A GHOST.

BUT.

ALL THE COMMONERS IN CLASS THINK I'M A TOTALLY NORMAL BOY.

BUT THAT'S A SECRET TO EVERYONE ELSE.

BECAUSE IT WOULD BE BAD IF EVERYONE FOUND OUT I WAS THIS AMAZING.

THAT OYA. ALWAYS ACTING SO HOT. I DEFINITELY TAUGHT HIM A LESSON.

ESPECIALLY THOSE TWO. ALL THE OTHERS ARE OUTSIDE FOR RECESS.

SO WHY WOULD THESE TWO STAY IN THE CLASSROOM? BECAUSE I'M HERE, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

KEH KEH KEH

IT SEEMS I CAN'T ESCAPE THE ATTENTION OF THE GIRLS.

HEE HEE!

YEAH.

HEY, LET'S GO OUTSIDE?

HE'S NOT NORMAL. HIS FACE IS SO GLOOMY AND CREEPY.

KEH KEH KEH

HE'S LAUGHING. I WONDER WHAT'S SO FUNNY.

WHAT'S THAT?

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DOESN'T GET IT!

YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?!

QUIT IT AL-READY! APOLO-GIZE!

YOU GOT A PROB-LEM?

WHAT ?!

KLATTER

I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU TRY!

I'M GONNA HIT YOU!

THEY'VE NEVER REALLY GOTTEN ALONG.

KURODA AND AKIYAMA ARE FIGHTING!

BASH

ANOTHER HATRED IS BORN.

HEH HEH.

CHK

WHOA! HE STARTED CRYING!

WAAAAAH!

...YOU CAN OFTEN FIND A HIBERNATING FROG.

...IF YOU DIG IN THE GROUND AROUND HERE...

FOR INSTANCE, ON COLD DAYS LIKE THIS...

I MIGHT NOT LOOK IT, BUT I'M A GENTLE-HEARTED BOY.

IT'S NICE AND WARM.

WOULDN'T YOU RATHER COME TO MY HOUSE?

IT MUST BE SO COLD IN THE DIRT.

AAH, THERE, THERE.

PUSH

I EVEN PUT SPLISHY SPLASHY WATER IN IT.

LOOK! THIS IS YOUR NEW HOMEY HOME HOME.

KODAK

CANDY

CANDY

CANDY

CA

SHF

STMP

STMP

AAH, COME ON, YOU! THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS TRYING TO DO!

HERE WE GO!

HA HA HA HA HA!

SO SPLEN-DID.

THE HAPPY FAMILY ALL TO-GETHER AFTER SUPPER.

ALWAYS THROWING HIS WEIGHT AROUND AS THE OLDER BROTHER. USELESS.

A DIS-GUSTING PERSON WHO ACTS SERIOUS.

THAT'S MY OLDER BROTHER, KOICHI.

WHILE IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM, I DO WORRY ABOUT THEIR FUTURES.

PITIFUL GIRL THINKS SHE'S PRETTY.

THAT'S SAYURI, MY OLDER SISTER.

SUCH A DULL BUNCH. MWAH HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA!

I HAVE NOTHING IN PARTICULAR TO SAY WITH REGARD TO MOM, DAD, AND GRANDPA.

I'M EN-GROSSED IN MY OWN THOUGHTS.

NAH. I'LL PASS. I WOULDN'T WANT TO DISRUPT THE HAPPY FAMILY.

IF YOU WANT TO WATCH TV, THEN COME IN.

SOICHI, WHAT'RE YOU MUTTERING ABOUT OVER THERE?

IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO COME IN, CLOSE THE DOOR. IT'S COLD.

INSTEAD OF GRUMBLING ABOUT EVERYONE ELSE, MAYBE YOU SHOULD TAKE A HARD LOOK AT YOURSELF?

YOUR THOUGHTS? YOU'RE PROBABLY JUST BAD-MOUTHING PEOPLE AGAIN.

YOU... YOU'RE SUCH AN IDIOT. I'LL MAKE YOU MISERABLE SOON ENOUGH.

HE CALLED YOU AN IDIOT, KOICHI.

WHAT ?!

I HEARD HIM!

DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?

NO. NOTHING.

ULP! THAT JERK SAYURI HAS TO GO BLABBING ABOUT EVERYTHING.

SOICHI! WHY AM I AN IDIOT?! STOP!

CANDY

CANDY

TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP

AAAAAAAAH!

AAAAH!

YOU STOP THAT, SOICHI!

STOP IT, SOICHI! COME ON!

LOOK HERE, SAYURI! IT'S YOUR FAVORITE, MR. TOADY!

BWAH HA HA!

BEHAVE YOUR-SELF, SOICHI!

GO AWAY!

...I AM UNEXCEPTIONAL! UN-UN-UNEXCEPTIONAL! I HOLD MY HEAD HIGH!

DO YOU GET IT NOW? UNLIKE YOU AVERAGE PEOPLE...

?

OR MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?

OH HO! UNEXCEP-TIONAL, *HUH?* YOU'RE PRETTY HUMBLE.

"ON PAR WITH OTHERS"? DAMMIT. THAT JERK KOICHI! SHAMING ME LIKE THAT!

RUN-OF-THE-MILL...

DICTIONARY

I BETTER GET RIGHT TO IT.

BE-CAUSE A NEW JOB CAME IN TODAY.

HMPH! WHATEVER!

I DON'T HAVE THE TIME FOR THIS.

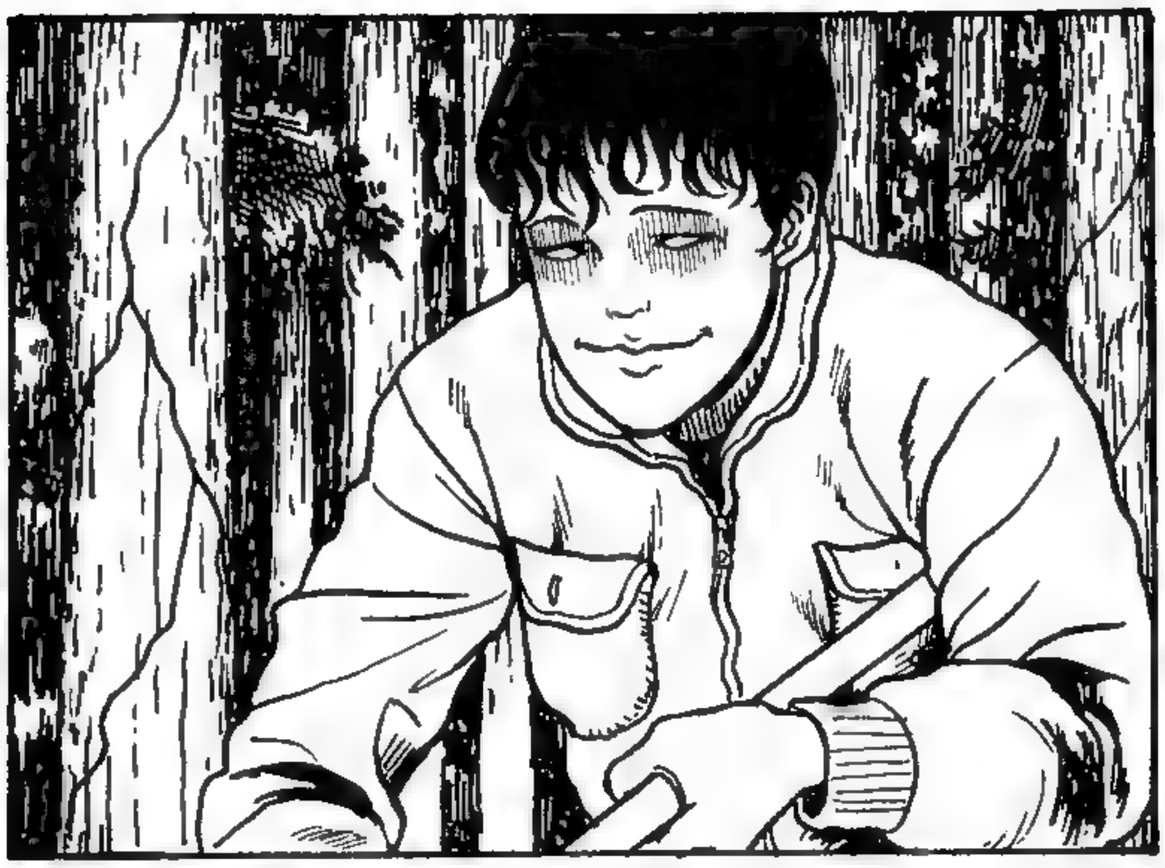
A HIBER-NATION CURSE.

I KNOW.

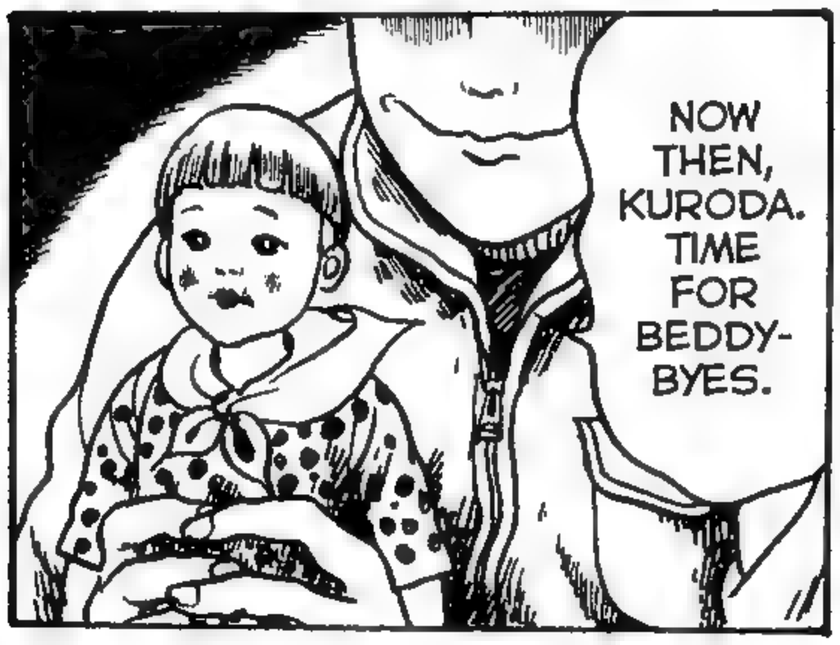
WHAT CURSE WOULD BE GOOD THIS TIME?

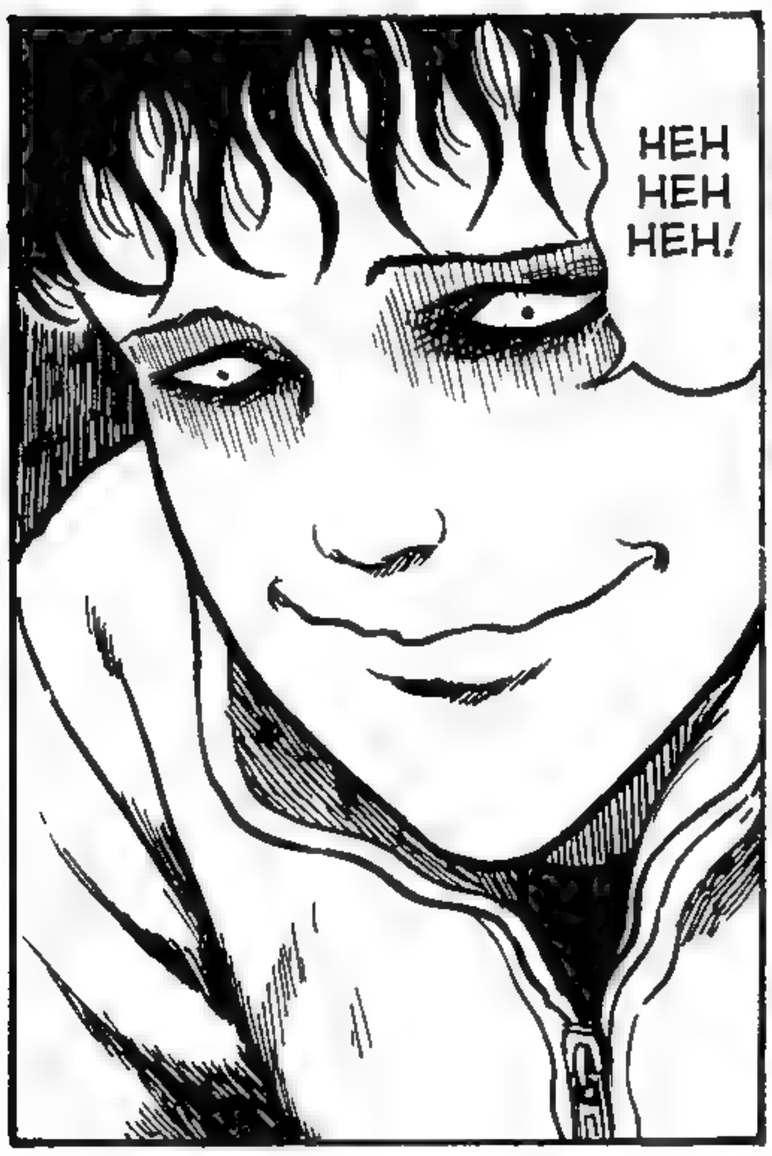
KRUCH

KRUCH



KRRCH


NOW THEN, KURODA. TIME FOR BEDDY-BYES.


HEH HEH HEH!

PAT
PAT

KSH
KSH

COME OUT WHEN IT'S SPRING.

A FEW DAYS LATER ...

I GUESS HE'S GONE MISSING.

HEY, YOU KNOW HOW KURODA HASN'T BEEN TO SCHOOL LATELY?

HUH?

HEY, AKIYAMA! YOU FOUGHT WITH HIM. YOU KNOW ANYTHING?

DON'T SAY THAT.

OR WAS HE KILLED?

WHAT? DID HE RUN AWAY? GET KIDNAPPED ?!

...

WHY WOULD I KNOW ANY-THING?

HEY, AKIYAMA.

KSH KSH

TCH!

KSH KSH

I'M NOT SITTING BACK AND WATCHING IT HAPPEN ANYMORE!

RRRR

COMING AROUND, HAMMERING NAILS INTO MY PRECIOUS CEDARS, PLAYING THESE PRANKS. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

ALL THE TIME IN THIS PLACE!

AGAIN ?!

I'M GONNA CATCH WHOEVER'S DOING THIS!

WHAT'S THIS?

KSH

WHAT IS THIS?

KLAK

TCH!

KSH KSH

KSH

KSH

CRUNCH

SKSH

W-WHAT THE...

WHAT IS IT NOW? A MANNEQUIN HEAD?

IT'S A PERSON!

AAAH!

POKE POKE POKE

EEE OOO

EEE OOO

HE WAS SLEEPING IN THE DIRT?

NAH. HE WAS ASLEEP. I GUESS HE FINALLY WOKE UP WHEN THEY GOT HIM TO THE HOSPITAL.

HE WAS BURIED IN THE CEDAR WOODS.

THEY FOUND KURO-DA!

SO HE'S DEAD?!

AND IT WAS GOING TO BE SO FUNNY WHEN HE CRAWLED OUT OF THE GROUND IN THE SPRING!

ARGH, CURSES.

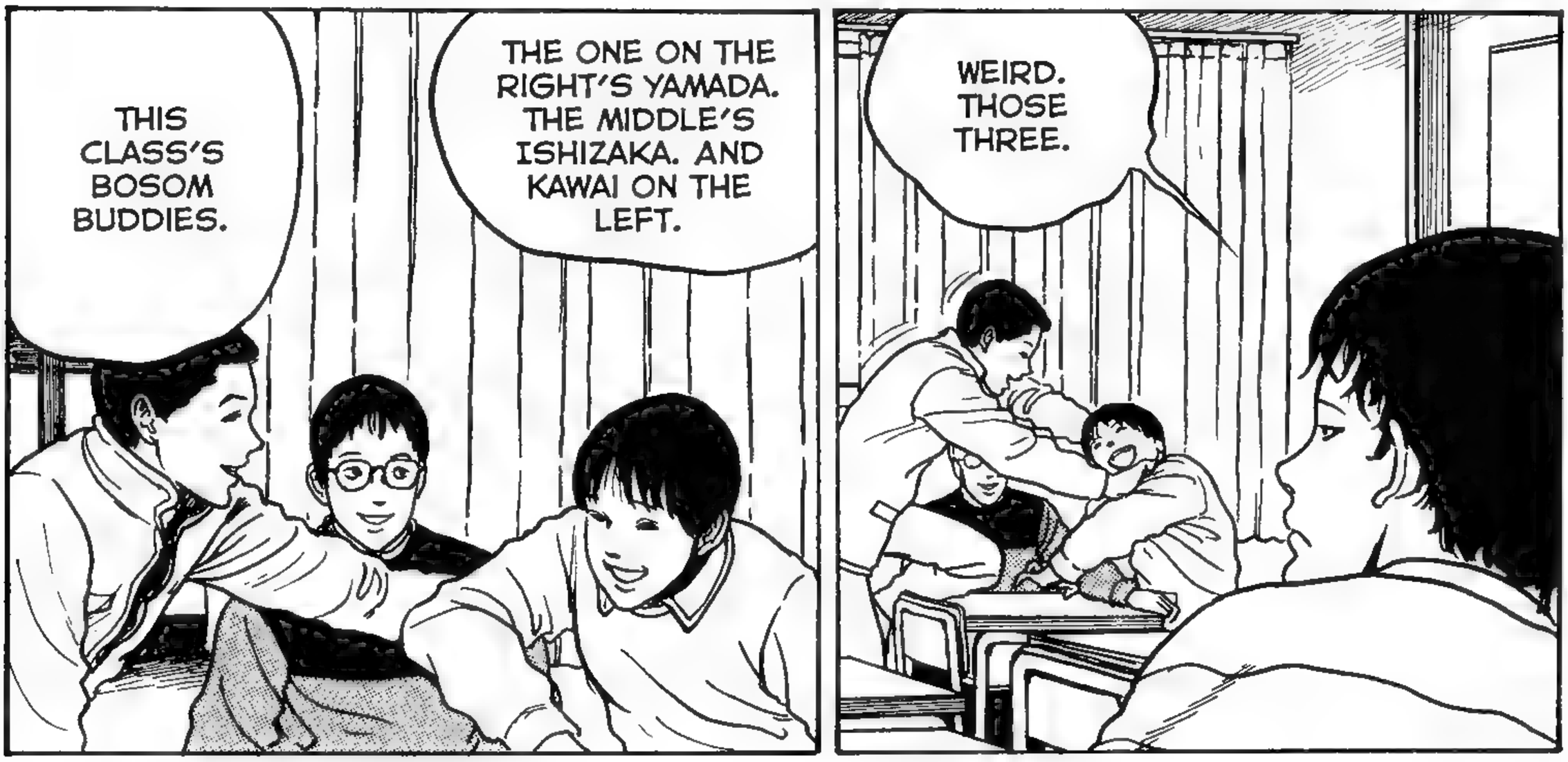
COME ON! SOMEONE WENT AND FOUND HIM.

AWWW, ARRRGH.

ASLEEP IN THE DIRT FOR DAYS WHEN IT'S THIS COLD?

I MEAN, SHEESH! IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S A SNAKE OR A FROG.
AND KURODA SAYS HE DOESN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING!
HA HA HA!

OH HO?
...


THIS CLASS'S BOSOM BUDDIES.
THE ONE ON THE RIGHT'S YAMADA. THE MIDDLE'S ISHIZAKA. AND KAWAI ON THE LEFT.
WEIRD. THOSE THREE.

SOMETHING MUDDY.

I SEE THEIR RELATIONSHIP FRAYING AROUND THEM.

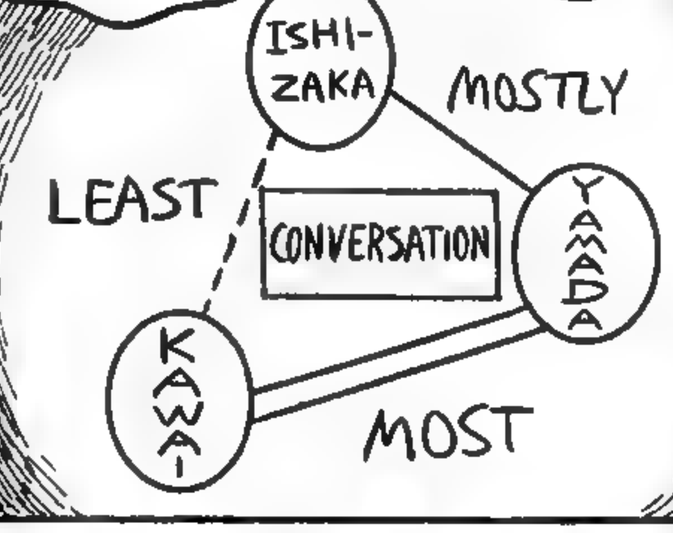
YOUR AVERAGE PERSON COULDN'T TELL, BUT I CAN.

BUT THE MOOD IS A BIT DIFFERENT TODAY.

AT FIRST GLANCE, THEY SEEM TO BE CHATTING HAPPILY.

WHAT ON EARTH COULD THIS MEAN?

THEY'RE SUPPOSEDLY ALL FRIENDS, SO THEY SHOULD BE TALKING MORE.



BUT KAWAI AND ISHIZAKA ARE HARDLY TALKING.

YAMADA AND KAWAI ARE IN HEATED CONVERSATION.

AN ENORMOUS CHANGE AMONG THE THREE FRIENDS IS COMING.

WATCH CLOSELY.

A REPULSIVE, DIRTY DARKNESS BUDDING IN EACH OF THEIR HEARTS.

BUT IN FRONT OF YAMADA, THEY PRETEND TO GET ALONG.

NOT TALKING MEANS YOU'VE GOT SOME RESERVATIONS.

YOU TALK A LOT WHEN YOU'RE CLOSE.

SO THEN, THERE'S SOMETHING UNPLEASANT BETWEEN KAWAI AND ISHIZAKA.

HE LOATHES HIM FROM THE BOTTOM OF HIS HEART.

YES...

ISHIZAKA HATES KAWAI.

I CAN SEE THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THEM.

ISHIZAKA IN HIS GLASSES CONSTANTLY PUSHED BACK BY SUNNY KAWAI.

THE HATRED GROWS FROM THERE.

MY MIGHTY POWERS OF INSIGHT. AN AVERAGE PERSON COULD NEVER.

HEH HEH HEH. SHARP READING.

KLATER

BATH-ROOM.

ISHI-ZAKA, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

WHAT D'YOU NEED?

OH, IT'S YOU, SOICHI.

HUH?

ISHI-ZAKA... ISHI-ZAKA...

...HOW HARD IT IS TO CURSE A PERSON.

DON'T HIDE IT. I KNOW ...

HUH?

WHAT MUST BE?

IT MUST BE SO HARD FOR YOU.

YOU LEAVE KAWAI TO ME. I'LL CURSE HIM FOR YOU.

BUT YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY NOW.

I KNOW YOU HATE KAWAI SO MUCH YOU WANT TO KILL HIM. YOU'RE CURSING HIM. THAT'S WHY YOU'RE NOT TALKING SO MUCH WITH HIM TODAY.

HEH HEH HEH.

?

WHAT ?!

DID WE REALLY NOT TALK THAT MUCH TODAY?

YEAH. HE SAYS THE WEIRDEST STUFF. WHAT IS GOING ON IN HIS HEAD?

SOICHI SAID THAT?

CURSE ME? HA HA HA HA!

HILARI-OUS.

HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO CURSE YOU.

DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION TO THAT GUY.

YEAH. BUT...

KSH

KSH

KSH

THAT'S A TRAP.

HEY, WHAT'S THAT?

HE'S ONE SCARY OLD MAN.

LOOK. IT'S THE MONSTER WHO OWNS THE CEDAR WOODS.

I'LL CATCH 'EM AND RIP 'EM APART.

THIS TIME FOR SURE, I'LL CATCH WHOEVER'S BEEN MESSING WITH MY CEDARS.

IT'S FROM OVERSEAS. IT WAS PRETTY EXPENSIVE.

NOW LEAVE ME ALONE.

A FLASH-LIGHT?

WHAT? AKIYAMA, YOU'RE GIVING THIS TO ME?

HEH HEH HEH. SEE YOU!

I LIKE IT. I'LL GO HOME RIGHT NOW AND TAKE A WALK IN THE ATTIC.

THANKS. ARE YOU SURE? OH YEAH, THIS IS THAT OVERSEAS QUALITY. COOL.

AAAH!

I FOUND IT IN THE ATTIC. THE CORPSE OF A MASSIVE JORO SPIDER.

EAT IT, SIS. IT'S YUMMY.

QUIT IT, SOICHI!

HEE HEE HEE!

NO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! GET AWAY FROM ME!

KOICHI! DO SOME-THING!

SOICHI! WHAT ARE YOU UP TO NOW?!

LOOK AT THESE LONG LEGS. SO BEAUTIFUL.

NO WAY. I MEAN, TOSSING THIS BEAUTY.

GO THROW THAT AWAY OUTSIDE!

WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS DOING STUFF LIKE THIS?

EEEK!

WHAP

ENOUGH!

WHAP

PLAP

UNH!

YUP.

HE JUST SAID "EEK."

HEY, SAYURI. THIS GUY...

DAMN YOU, KOICHI. HOW DARE YOU.

UNH!

HA HA HA! LOOKIE HERE!

W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

YOU THINK HE'S ACTUALLY SCARED OF SPIDERS?

OINK

TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP

I'M FINE WITH IT. SEE! LOOK!

SO GROSS!

HA... HA HA HA. TOUCHING THAT WITH YOUR BARE HANDS IS GROSS!

HMPH! I'M NOT A LITTLE KID, YOU KNOW.

KLAK

BECAUSE A NEW JOB CAME IN TODAY.

I DON'T HAVE THE TIME FOR THIS.

TMP TMP TMP

I KNOW.

HMPH. WHAT CURSE WOULD BE GOOD THIS TIME?

A SPIDER CURSE.

GLANCE

主人公は独特の表情をするような気持ち

JAPANESE 6TH GRADE

THK THK

GO TO THE BATH-ROOM.

KAWAI.

I WILL.

Ha ha!

ALL RIGHT, FINE. MAKE IT QUICK.

MAY I GO TO THE REST-ROOM?

6TH GRADE CLASS 1

E-EXCUSE ME?

WHAT IS IT, KAWAI?

RESTROOM

DAMN. I LOOKED SO UNCOOL.

HUH?

PTAN

KACHAK

KACHAK

IT WON'T OPEN!

KACHAK

KACHAK

KACHAK

WHAT ?

IF IT WAS GOING TO GO AWAY, I SHOULD'VE JUST STAYED IN CLASS.

WHAT THE? MY STOMACH STOPPED HURTING.

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

WHAT THE—?!

KEH... KEH KEH.

JAPANESE 国

PLOP

IT'S JUST A RUBBER TOY.

MAYBE I CAN CLIMB OVER THE TOP.

SKITTER

SKITTER

SKITTER

SKITTER

SKITTER

HM?

AAAAH!

LOOM

AH!

THUD

I-IT'S A SPIDER!

SHE

GAAAH!

STILL

KAWAI! WHAT'S GOING ON?!

EEEEAH!

KAWAI!!

BAM BAM

KAWAI! ARE YOU IN HERE?

I'M COMING IN!

KACHAK

KAWAI!

I HEARD HE WAS WRAPPED IN TOILET PAPER.

EEE OOO EEE OOO

HE PASSED OUT IN THE REST-ROOM.

HOW COME?

EEE OOO

ISHI-ZAKA.

CHATTER CHATTER

...

I JUST GAVE KAWAI A LITTLE TASTE OF YOUR WRATH.

IT'S NOT LIKE I'M ASKING FOR ANYTHING IN RETURN.

NOW, NOW.

WHAT?

SO? ARE YOU SATISFIED NOW?

I GUESS KAWAI WAS HALLUCI-NATING.

IF YOU'RE HAPPY, I'M HAPPY.

IF IT'S STILL NOT ENOUGH, I'VE GOT ANOTHER AMAZING ONE ALL READY. WANT ME TO GIVE IT A GO?

STILL, THAT SAID, I'M NOT SUCH A STINGY MAN AS TO PRESS YOU FOR MONEY OR GOODS.

I DON'T NEED ANY THANKS. NO, NO, I REALLY DON'T.

ALTHOUGH IT'S TRUE THAT WHAT I DID HAS SOME VALUE.

NOT AT ALL.

NO NEED TO THANK ME.

I DID IT FOR YOU.

NOW, NOW. DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME. I'M NOT EXPECTING THANKS.

SO A THANK-YOU, WELL...

WHAT EXACTLY DID YOU DO TO HIM?

AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU PUNISHED KAWAI? IS IT YOUR FAULT HE PASSED OUT?!

HEY, ISHIZAKA? WHAT'S GOING ON?

SOICHI, WHAT ARE YOU MUTTERING ABOUT?!

OH. IT'S NOTHING. REALLY.

ISHI-ZAKA, WHAT WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

RRRR

YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED OUT OF FIVE MILLION PEOPLE!

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE AN EXTREMELY LUCKY FELLOW!

YES, THAT'S ME.

OH, HELLO! IS THIS YASUO ISHIZAKA?

WE'LL DISCUSS ALL THE DETAILS THERE!

YOU NOW HAVE THE SPECIAL PRIVILEGE OF TAKING A TRIP AROUND THE WORLD FOR FREE. PLEASE COME TO SAKURAYAMA PARK NEAR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RIGHT AWAY!

THAT IDIOT SAID HE'D COME!

KEE SHEE SHEE SHEE!

KACHAK

MAKE SURE YOU COME, OKAY!

I HAVE TO HURRY AND GET READY!

RSTLE

RSTLE

BUT HE WAS A WRECK AFTER THE FIRST CURSE. SO I'LL SCARE ISHIZAKA INSTEAD.

KSH

KSH

I ACTUALLY MADE THIS TO SCARE KAWAI.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S UP TO, BUT I'LL FACE HIM DOWN.

THAT VOICE WAS DEFINITELY SOICHI.

?

IF HE'S COMING, I WISH HE'D COME ALREADY.

IT'S COLD.

GATOKZ

GATOKZ

GATOKZ

GATOKZ

GATOKZ

GATOKZ

W-WHAT IS THAT...

GATO-KZ

GATO-KZ

AAAH!

GATONK

GATONK

GATONK

HAAH!
HAAH!

KSH
KSH

KSH KSH KSH

AH! IT FOL-LOWED ME!

KSH KSH KSH

MWAH HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA!

KSHOOO

CLAZZ

THWRKT

CRACK

CRACK

KSHH

KSHH

KSHH

...

KSHKSH

DAZOLE

CURSE YOU! ISHI-ZAKA!

DAZOLE

YOU PLANNED THIS!

SOICHI ?!

Y-YOU ...

YOU'RE IN REAL TROU-BLE WHEN HE FINDS YOU.

IDIOT! THAT OLD MONSTER WHO OWNS THESE WOODS SET THE TRAP.

YOU COWARD! SETTING A TRAP FOR ME!

...

WHAT?

HE SHOULD BE ASHAMED AS A HUMAN BEING, ABANDONING ME AND GOING HOME.

HE REALLY LEFT.

SO WHAT THEN?

I'M SAYING YOU SHOULD RUN WHILE YOU CAN. IT'S NOT ON ME. IT'LL BE A WHOLE THING WHEN THAT OLD GUY SHOWS. I'M OUT OF HERE!

NNNGH. I CAN'T GET MY LEGS OUT.

KSH

KSH KSH KSH

AH!

YOOF YOOF

HNGH!

KSHKSHKSH

KSH

WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP THERE?

HEY, YOU.

MEOW.

MEOW.

CAUGHT YOU IN MY TRAP. GEH HA HA HA HA!

AHA! IT'S YOU, ISN'T IT? THE ONE WHO'S BEEN MESSING AROUND WITH MY CEDARS.

GO TO HELL!

GEH HA HA HA! I'M TEARING YOU LIMB FROM LIMB!

NO USE PRE-TENDING TO BE A CAT!

HYOOo

AAAAAH! HEEEEELP!

GAH!

THUNK

MOMMYYYY! HELP MEEEE!

HELP ME! SPARE MY LIFE AT LEAST!

BWAH HA HA HA! THIS IS FOR WHAT YOU DID TO MY CEDARS.

TONIGHT, YOU DIE.

HEE HEE HEE! SCREAM ALL YOU WANT.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

I'M GONNA KILL YOU!

GAH HA HA HA HA! YOU'RE DEAD!

TCH, OUT SO LATE AT NIGHT... I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU!

HEY, SOICHI! WHAT'RE YOU DOING UP THERE?

WHO ARE YOU?!

DANGLE

TAKING HIM IN TO THE POLICE? DO YOU HAVE ANY PROOF MY LITTLE BROTHER DID IT?

KOICHIIII! HELP MEEEEE!

PROOF? WHAT DON'T YOU GET HERE?! HIM BEING UP THERE IS PLENTY PROOF!

I'M TAKING HIM IN TO THE POLICE. YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?!

I'M PUNISHING THIS BRAT FOR DAMAGING MY CEDARS WITH HIS LITTLE PRANKS!

RIGHT. YOU'RE THE KID'S BROTHER.

YOU?

GREAT. SOUNDS GOOD.

?

OKAY. I'LL COME WITH YOU TO THE STATION.

I SEE. I GUESS SO.

I WONDER WHAT THEY'LL SAY WHEN THEY HEAR YOU USED ONE ON A PERSON?

WHAT ?!

THESE THINGS SURE ARE DANGEROUS. I HEARD THEY'RE ILLEGAL.

BUT IF WE GO TO THE POLICE, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TELL THEM ABOUT THIS TRAP, TOO.

IT'S NOT A THREAT. IT'S THE TRUTH.

A KID LIKE YOU TRYING TO THREATEN A GROWN MAN LIKE ME?!

I'LL KILL YOU ON THE SPOT NEXT TIME I SEE YOU!

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU TWO!

TCH!

SNOT-NOSED BRATS!

CRACK

HEY, SOICHI!

WE'RE GOING HOME!

PHEW ...

I WAS FREAKED, DAMMIT.

OWW! DON'T PULL ON MY EAR!

WALK AL-READY!

HMPH! DID YOU THINK LORD ME WOULD BE UNNERVED AT SUCH A TRIVIALITY? YOU SEEM LIKE YOU WANT A THANK-YOU. WELL, I WASN'T THE LEAST BIT SCARED OF THAT STUPID OLD MAN.

YOU WANDER AROUND AT NIGHT, AND THAT'S WHAT YOU GET. BUT IT WAS GOOD MEDICINE FOR YOU!

YOUR FATHER'S RIGHT, SOICHI! YOU APOLOGIZE RIGHT NOW!

YES, EXACTLY! COME ON, SOICHI!

SOICHI! WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS CAUSING YOUR PARENTS GRIEF?

WE'RE HOME!

HMPH. I DON'T HAVE TIME TO SIT AND LISTEN TO YOU.

SOICHI!

HEY! WE'RE NOT DONE HERE, YOUNG MAN!

MR. TOADYYYY! IT'S BEEN A WHILE! HOW ABOUT I LET YOU OUT NOOOW?

CANDY

I'VE GOT A CUTE LITTLE PAL CALLED MR. TOADY.

BZZZ

KAPOK

HOW MANY DAYS HAS IT BEEN?

MR. TOADY!

...

HM?

HRMMM.

SOICHI'S PETTY CURSES/END

よん　じゅう　かべ

四重の壁

FOUR-LAYERED ROOM

THIS HAPPENED WHEN I (KOICHI) WAS FRANTICALLY STUDYING FOR FINALS.

WHUMP

WHUMP

BAM

WHUMP

HNGH.

PACK

WHAP

DO SOMETHING ABOUT SOICHI!

DAD!

WHUMP

DAMMIT! I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE.

WHUMP

WHUMP

QUIT IT ALREADY, SOICHI!!

HE'S SO LOUD, I CAN'T STAND THE NOISE!

HE'S BEEN ACTING OUT LATELY!

HE'S BUGGING ME WHEN I'M STUDYING! AND I'VE GOT FINALS SOON!

GIVE IT UP ALREADY!

HUH? SO *THIS* IS WHERE YOU ARE?

QUIT JUMPING AROUND IN THE ATTIC!

WHAT? DID SOICHI DO SOMETHING?

YOU WERE JUST IN THE ATTIC!

DON'T GIVE ME THAT!

WHAT?

UH?

NO, IT'S TRUE. YOU CAN'T GO BLAMING EVERYTHING ON SOICHI.

WHAT?! HE CAN'T HAVE BEEN!

HE'S RIGHT, KOICHI. HE'S BEEN HERE THIS WHOLE TIME.

I'M TELLING YOU, IT WASN'T ME. DON'T TALK ABOUT ME LIKE THAT.

CHK CHK CHK CHK

WEIRD.

YOUR GRADES WILL DROP.

DROP... DROP...

?!

YOU'LL GET ZERO ON YOUR FINALS. AND YOUR TEACHER WILL YELL AT YOU. YELL AT YOU.

COME IN LAST. COME IN LAST.

DROP, DROP, YOUR GRADES WILL DROP. PLUMMET, PLUMMET. YOUR GRADES WILL PLUMMET.

TMP TMP TMP TMP

DAMN YOU, SOICHI.

GET YELLED AT AND CRY. CRY...

SOICHI! I'M GOING TO KICK YOUR ASS!

KLATER

I SAID, STOP!

TMP TMP TMP

JUST WAIT, SOICHI!

TMP

YOU'RE DONE FOR!

FWUMP

I WASN'T! AAAH! I'M GONNA PEE MY PAAANTS!

HEEELP!

LIAR! YOU WERE TRYING TO BUG ME!

YOU'RE SO MEAN, KOICHI!

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I WAS RUNNING TO THE BATH-ROOOM!

AAAH!

GAH! YOU REALLY DID PEE YOUR PANTS!

AAAAH!

I CAN'T HOLD IT!

IS THIS TRUE, SOICHI?

HM.

IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD, KOICHI.

IT HURTS THAT YOU'D BLAME ME.

I MEAN, EVERYONE KNOWS I WASN'T IN THE ATTIC, OKAY?

MY GRADES ARE GOING TO DROP IF THIS KEEPS UP. YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT SOICHI'S PRANKS.

COULD BE THE WORK OF A NOISY GHOST MESSING AROUND.

YEAH. SOUNDS WHEN NO ONE'S THERE.

A POLTER-GEIST?

WHAT ?!

OR ELSE IT'S A POLTER-GEIST, MAYBE.

AND I'VE HEARD A RAPPING SOUND MYSELF.

SPEAKING OF, IT'S BEEN WEIRDLY CHILLY IN THE HOUSE LATELY.

KOICHI, ARE YOU BELITTLING THE POL-TERGEIST?

...

AND A RAPPING SOUND? COME ON!

STUPID.

YOU'RE TALKING NONSENSE. IT'S WINTER. OF COURSE IT'S COLD.

HA HA HA HA HA HA!

BWAH HA HA HA HA HA HA!

...

BELITTLING A GHOST, WHO KNOWS WHAT FATE WILL BEFALL YOU!

NOT MY FAULT! YOU'RE IN FOR IT!

MWAH HA HA HA! YOU'RE REALLY IN FOR IT!

RIDICU-
LOUS.

WHAT GHOST?

TIK

TIK

TIK

URSE

BUT HE'S THE ONE MAKING IT.

BAM

A RAPPING SOUND?

KLATTER

KLATTER

KLATTER

KLATTER

SLASH

EXAM COURSE

FWWWM

CLANK CLANK!

AH!

FSSSSS

...

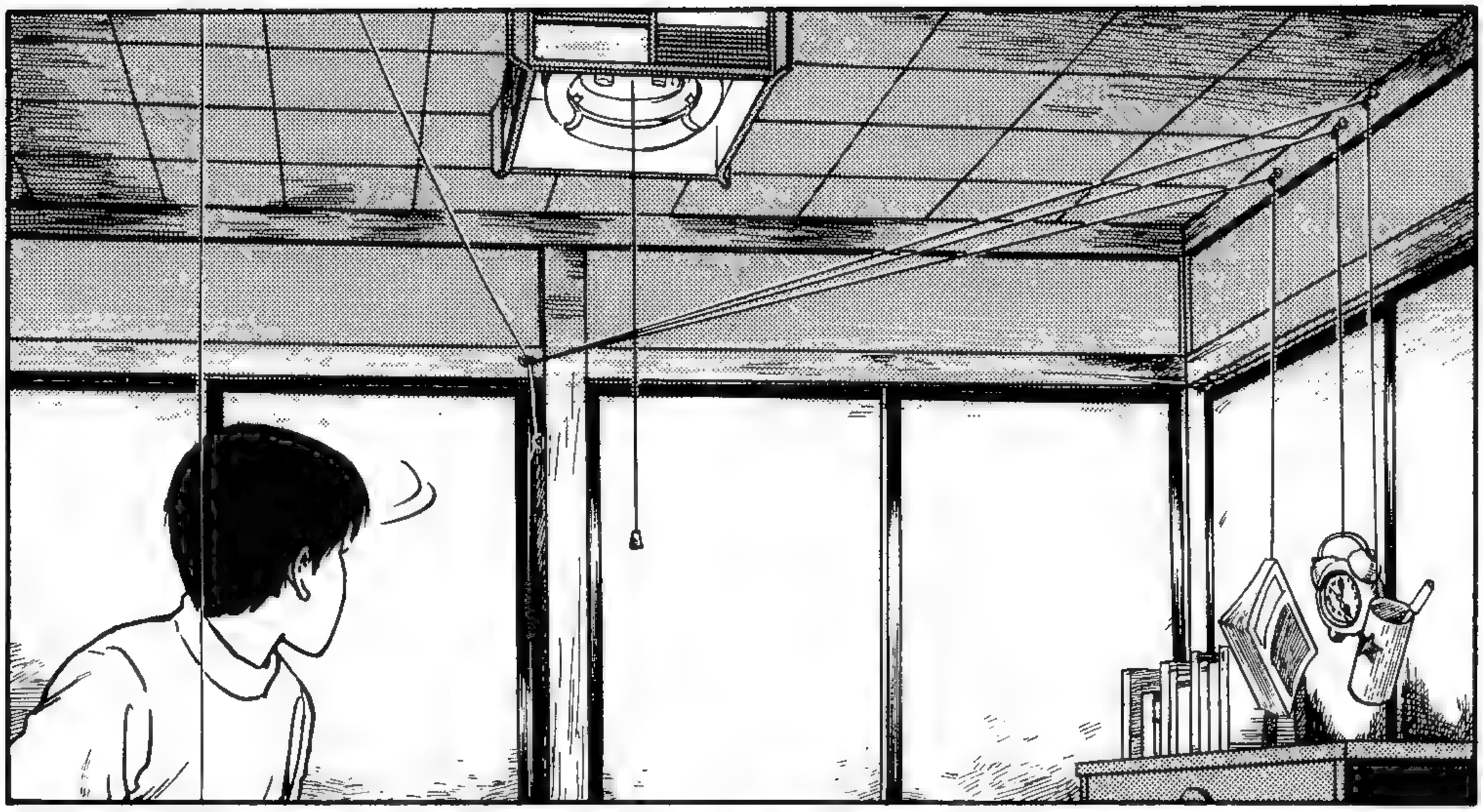
CRASH

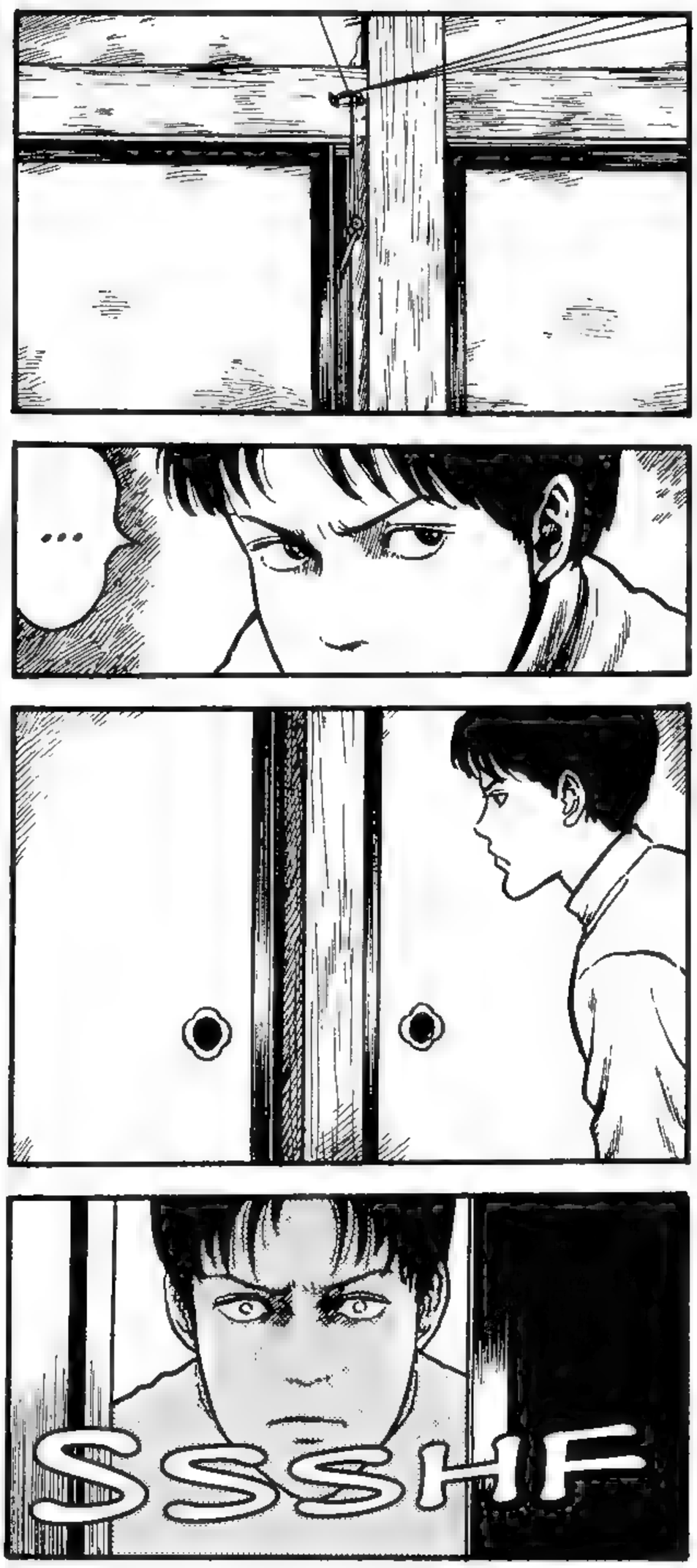
HM?

IS THIS THE POLTER-GEIST?

THIS ...

WHAT THE? A STRING?





SSSHF

IF YOU PULL ON THIS, YOU GET A POLTER-GEIST PHENOM-ENON. SEE?

CLANK CLANK

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY CLOSET, SOICHI?

HEH HEH HEH...

AND THE STOMPING AROUND IN THE ATTIC, TOO?

HMPH. SO THEN ALL OF THIS WAS YOUR DOING?

YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME, YOU JERK!

I WAS SIMPLY TRYING TO HELP IT TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY.

NO. THAT REALLY WAS A POL-TERGEIST!

COME ON, DAD!

HMM. AND WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO? THERE'S NO WAY TO STRAIGHTEN HIM OUT.

DAD! PLEASE! DO SOMETHING ABOUT SOICHI. IF YOU DON'T, I'M LEAVING!

I'VE GOT AN IDEA.

NOW HOLD ON, KOICHI!

THEN I'LL LEAVE. I'LL STAY IN A BOARDING HOUSE AND GO TO SCHOOL FROM THERE!

YEAH.

WOULD THAT DO IT FOR YOU?

IT'LL COST A BIT, BUT I DON'T SEE ANOTHER WAY.

A FRIEND OF MINE'S A CONTRACTOR. HOW ABOUT I GET HIM TO SOUNDPROOF YOUR ROOM?

THE CONTRACTOR HAD OTHER THINGS TO TAKE CARE OF, SO HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GET TO IT UNTIL THE NEXT MONTH.

IT WOULD BE TOO LATE FOR FINALS, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO ABOUT THAT.

AH, HELLO? IS THIS OBATA CONSTRUCTION? OH, HEY, MR. BOSS MAN! IT'S ME, TSUJII. HOW'VE YOU BEEN?

MM-HMM. I ACTUALLY WANTED TO ASK YOU TO DO SOME SOUND-PROOFING.

OKAY. YOU THINK YOU COULD?

YES? CAN I HELP YOU?

HOW-EVER, THE NEXT DAY...

HELLO! ANYONE HOME?

I'M HERE TO DO THE RENOVATIONS ON YOUR SON'S ROOM.

I WAS SENT BY OBATA CONSTRUC-TION. THE NAME'S TAGAISU.

YES, WELL. YOUR HUSBAND IS A GOOD FRIEND OF PRESIDENT OBATA, AND SO I CAME STRAIGHTAWAY ON HIS ORDERS.

WE DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE ABLE TO COME SO SOON.

DON'T MIND IF I DO!

GOODNESS! IS THAT RIGHT? WELL, PLEASE COME IN.

I SHOULD BE DONE BEFORE YOUR SON'S FINAL EXAMS.

NOW THEN, HOW ABOUT I GET RIGHT TO WORK?

THE CON-TRACTOR'S HERE.

KLATTER KLATTER

WHAT'S GOING ON?

BAM BAM

BANG BANG

HUH?

OH, THANKS! DON'T MIND IF I DO!

MR. TAGAISU, TAKE A LITTLE BREAK. I BROUGHT SOME TEA.

WOW. I DIDN'T THINK THEY'D BE HERE SO SOON.

TAP TAP

YOU LEAVE IT TO ME. I'LL SET YOU UP WITH A TOP-NOTCH SOUNDPROOF ROOM USING THE LATEST TECHNIQUES.

WELL, WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE YOUNG MAN!

THANKS SO MUCH FOR DOING THIS.

THAT'S RIGHT. A FOUR-LAYERED WALL TO SHUT OUT ALL SOUND.

OH, THE LATEST TECH-NIQUES?

UH?

"FOUR" IS A HOMONYM FOR "DEATH."

TWO OR THREE LAYERS IS NOT ENOUGH. FOUR LAYERS, THAT'S WHEN THE SOUND FINALLY DIES.

YES. AND THERE IS ACTUALLY MEANING IN THE FOUR LAYERS.

FOUR-LAYERED? THAT'S... IMPRES-SIVE.

*A HOMONYM IN JAPANESE. 四 (FOUR) READS "SHI" AND 死 (DEATH) ALSO READS "SHI."

BANG

HA HA HA HA!

HEH HEH HEH!

BANG

BANG BANG

BANG

HA HA HA HA!

HEH HEH HEH! DIE! DIE!

HA HA HA! DIE! DIE!

BANG

SORRY, SIR. HE'S REALLY AN IMPOSSIBLE KID.

HITS THE NAIL NICE AND SQUARE.

NO, NO. HE SEEMS TO KNOW HIS WAY AROUND A HAMMER.

YOU CAN'T GO GETTING IN THE WAY!

HEY, SOICHI!

HEH HEH HEH. HA HA HA!

IS THAT SO? THEN MAYBE YOU COULD GIVE ME A HAND?

YOUNG SIR, YOU'RE NO ORDINARY FELLOW, HM?

KEH HEH HEH. I LOVE HAMMERING NAILS.

BAM BAM

BANG BANG

SKREE

TOO LATE FOR IT TONIGHT.

OBATA'S REALLY PUT HIMSELF OUT FOR US. I'LL CALL TOMORROW TO SAY THANKS.

HE WAS HELPING MR. TAGAISU ALL DAY TODAY.

I WAS SURPRISED BY SOICHI, THOUGH.

OUR SOICHI ?

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING OFF ABOUT THIS TAGAISU GUY.

HMM.

OFF? IN WHAT WAY?

HE DID, DID HE? MAYBE THAT'S HOW WE STRAIGHTEN SOICHI OUT.

HE SAID SOICHI'S HAMMERING TECHNIQUE WAS EXQUISITE!

WELL NOW! THAT MIGHT BE THE FIRST TIME ANYONE'S EVER COMPLIMENTED SOICHI!

MR. TAGAISU EVEN COMPLIMENTED HIM, SAID HE GOT MUCH MORE DONE TODAY THAN PLANNED.

HE REALLY DID GET A LOT DONE IN ONE DAY.

OH, WHAT'S THIS? HE'S ALREADY PUT THE DOOR UP?

LET'S JUST HAVE A LOOK. SEE TODAY'S PROGRESS.

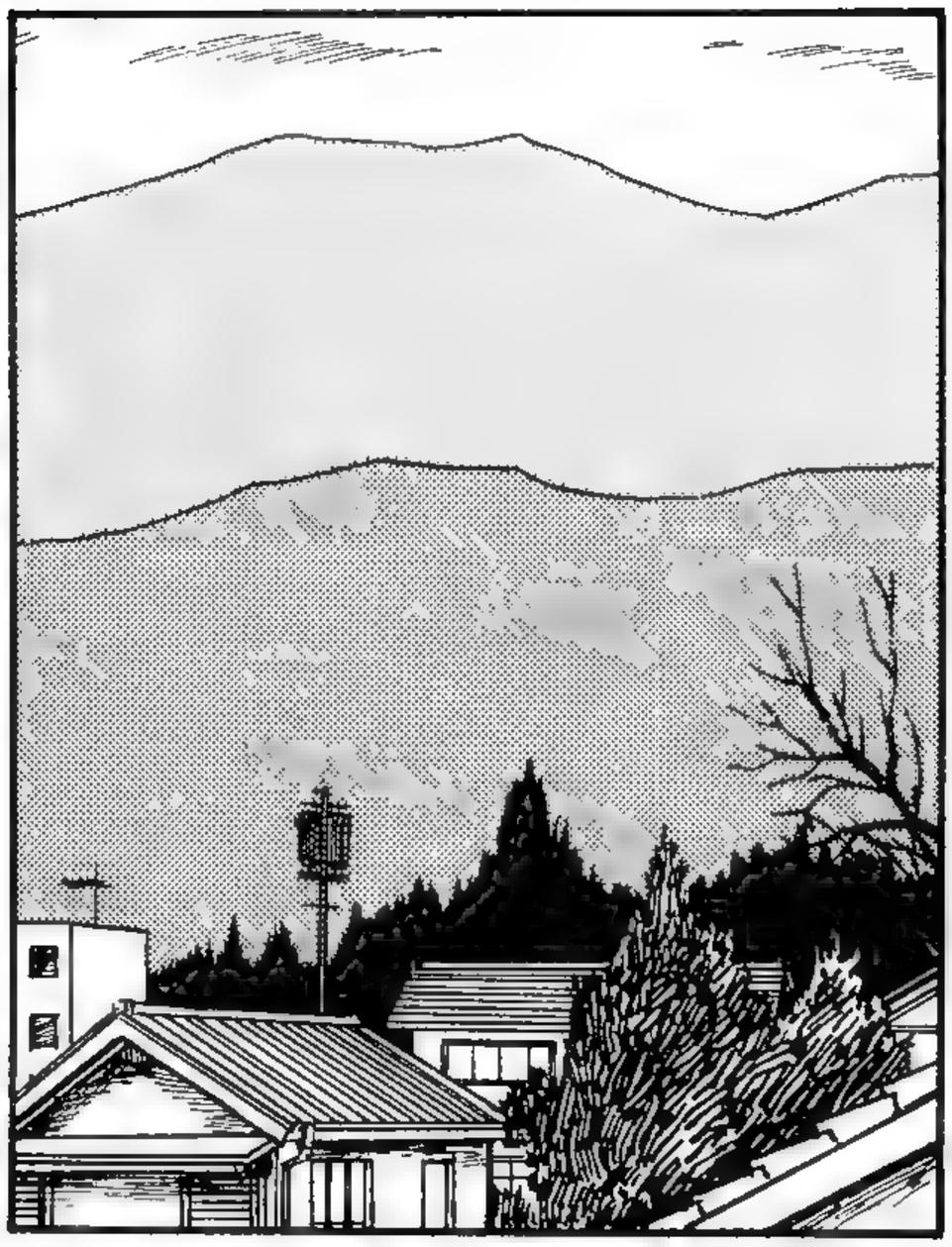
IT'S LOCKED?

HM?

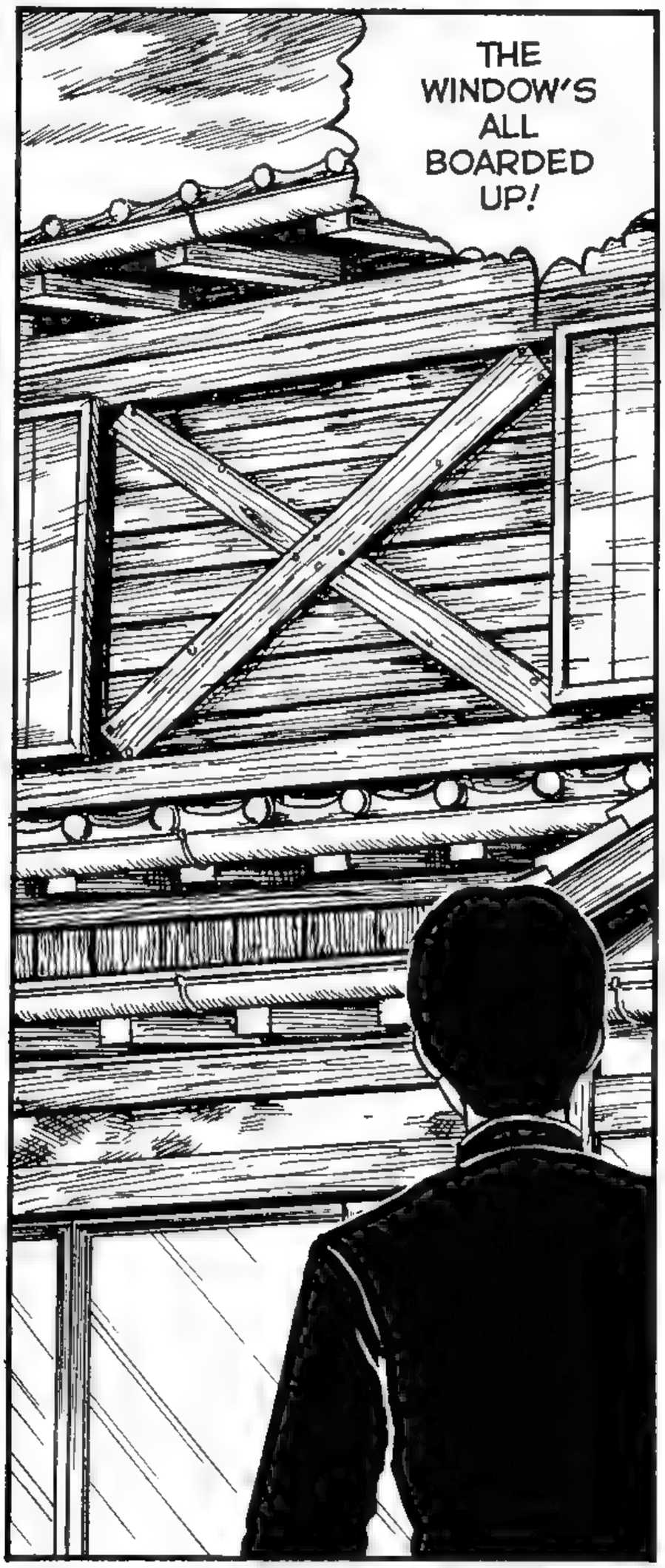
OKAY. I'LL TAKE A PEEK INSIDE THEN.

KLK

HUH?



KLATTER KLATTER KLATTER
I'M HOME!
WHAT THE HECK?


THE WINDOW'S ALL BOARDED UP!

OH! HI, KOICHI.

WHY IS THE WINDOW GONE?

OHH, THE WINDOW? SOUND PASSES QUITE EASILY THROUGH GLASS. I HAD TO CLOSE IT UP.

MR. TAGAISU !

HELLO, YOUNG SIR! SO YOU'RE BACK FROM SCHOOL.

SURE AM. WELL, GOOD-BYE!

KLATTER KLATTER

HUH? YOU'RE FIN-ISHED AL-READY ?

WHICH MEANS I'M ALL DONE HERE, SO I'LL BE ON MY WAY.

THAT ROOM IS COM-PLETELY SOUND-PROOF NOW. HEH HEH!

I HAVEN'T SEEN IT YET.

MOM, WHAT'S MY ROOM LOOK LIKE?

DID HE REALLY FINISH IT?

KLATTER KLATTER KLAK

...

EMRK

KACHAK

AH!

GAH!

KREEEE

DOUBLE DOORS!

KACHAK

THERE'S ANOTHER DOOR INSIDE THE DOOR!

KREEEE

AH!

N-NO WAY... THERE CAN'T ACTUALLY BE ANOTHER DOOR INSIDE THE DOOR INSIDE THE DOOR INSIDE THE DOOR!

KACHAK

ANOTHER DOOR INSIDE THE DOOR INSIDE THE DOOR!

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO FIT THROUGH, MOM.

I DON'T LIKE THIS. WHAT IF THERE'S ANOTHER DOOR BEHIND THIS ONE?

KACHAK

KREEEE

THERE IS!

AND THE DOORS ARE GET-TING SMALL-ER.

FOUR LAYERS OF WALL, SO FOUR DOORS, I GUESS.

YOU CAN RELAX, MOM. THERE ARE ONLY FOUR DOORS.

BUT THE ROOM'S SO SMALL!

SO THIS IS PROBABLY...

YOU'RE RIGHT! IT'S FILLED RIGHT UP WITH JUST THE DESK!

IN EXCHANGE, THE SOUND-PROOFING IS BAR NONE.

BASICALLY, THE ROOM ITSELF IS SMALLER BECAUSE HE DID THE FOUR-LAYERED WALLS.

ATTIC

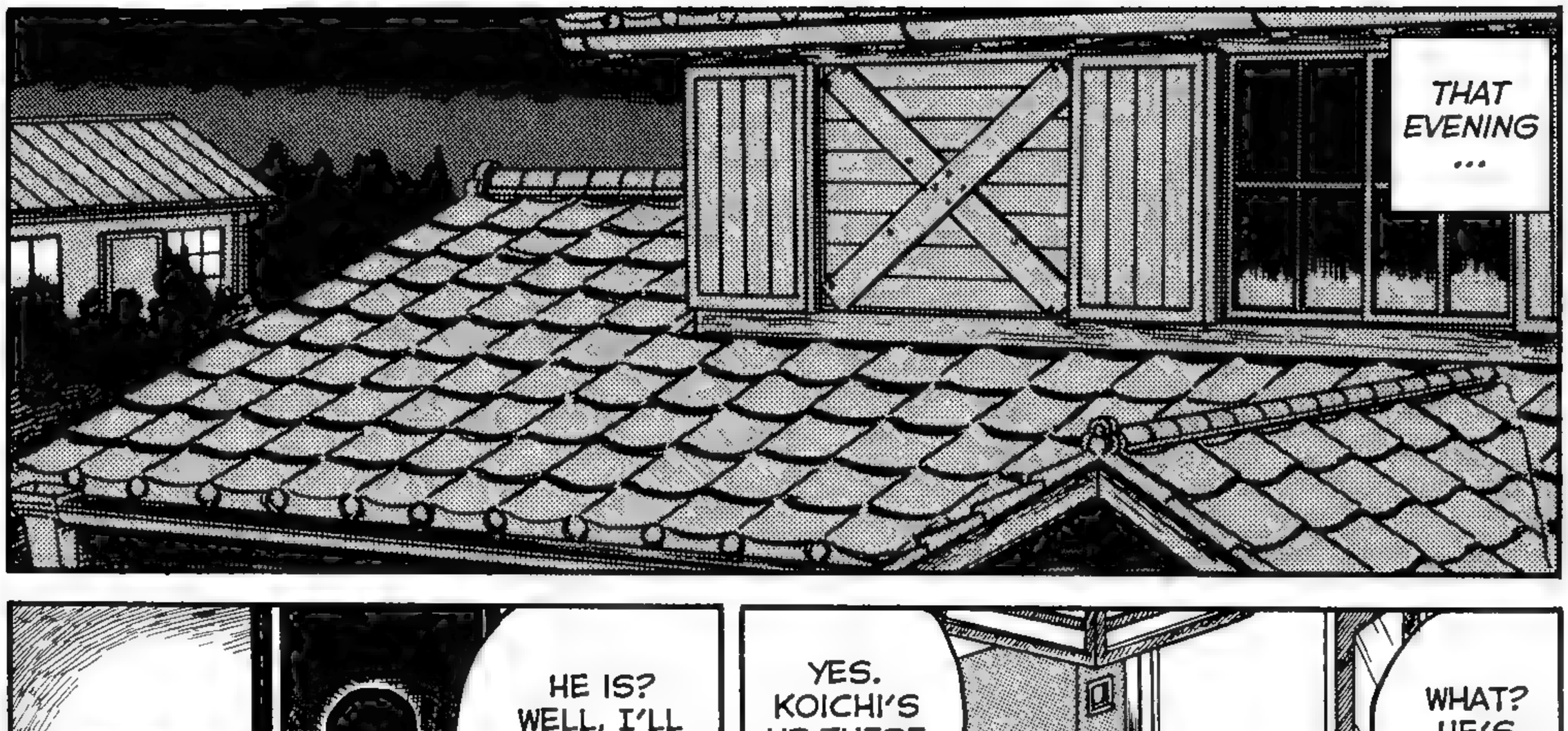
IF I DIA-GRAMMED IT...

Hall-way

AS LONG AS I CAN STUDY IN PEACE AND QUIET, I DON'T MIND.

YEAH. WELL.

BUT ARE YOU SURE IT'S OKAY THIS SMALL, KOICHI?


THAT EVENING ...

HE IS? WELL, I'LL HAVE TO CALL AND THANK OBATA.

YES. KOICHI'S UP THERE STUDYING NOW.
WHAT? HE'S DONE ALREADY ?

I REALLY CAN'T HEAR ANY OUTSIDE SOUND. IT'S SO QUIET MY EARS DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

HUSH

BUT HE SAID YOU SENT HIM. MM-HMM. MAN BY THE NAME OF TAGAISU.

YOU NEVER HEARD OF HIM? THAT'S JUST... RIDICULOUS... OKAY.

YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

HUSH

I WAS BAFFLED BY IT AT FIRST, BUT I GUESS THE FOUR-LAYERED WALL MAKES SENSE.

HUSH

IT REALLY IS QUIET. HOW LONG'S IT BEEN SINCE I COULD REALLY FOCUS AND STUDY LIKE THIS?

REEEE

REEEE

HM ?!

REEEE

...

WELL, I GUESS HE REALLY LIKES HAMMERING NAILS.

REEEE

I MEAN, HE WAS HAPPILY HELPING THE CONTRACTOR.

BUT WHY DIDN'T SOICHI TRY AND GET IN THE WAY?

REEEE
REEE

IT'S SOICHI'S VOICE!

AH!

HE'S MIMICKING A CICADA!

REEEEEE
REEEEEE

AND IT'S NOT EVEN CICADA SEASON!

W-WHAT THE—?! THIS CICADA IS...

SUPER LOUD!

REEE REEEE

IT'S SUPPOSEDLY PROTECTED BY FOUR LAYERS OF WALL!

BUT HOW CAN I HEAR HIM IN THIS ROOM?!

STMP STMP

REEE
REEE

I CAN HEAR HIS VOICE LIKE IT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL!

I CAN'T STAND IT!

KNOCK

THE SPACE BETWEEN THESE DOORS... IT'S ENOUGH TO FIT A PERSON.

I GET IT.

REEEE REEEE

REEEE REEEE

IF I DREW A PICTURE, IT'D BE LIKE THIS.

HALLWAY

REEEE REEEE

THAT JERK SOICHI... HE'S GOTTEN INTO THE GAP!

HE MUST HAVE GOTTEN IN THROUGH THE ATTIC.

RIGHT.

HOW'D HE GET IN THERE?!

DAMMIT! HOW?

THERE.

THIS'D BE THE OUTERMOST GAP THEN.

I KNEW IT!

THERE SHOULD BE AN OPENING INTO THE SECOND GAP.

REEE REEE REEE

SHF

THERE'S EVEN WIRING FOR LIGHTS.

THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD MAKE THESE OPENINGS, OR THE LADDERS.

WHICH MEANS THAT TAGAISU GUY PUT THIS TOGETHER FOR HIM.

ACTUALLY... THE SPACES BETWEEN THE WALLS THEMSELVES HAVE TO BE HERE FOR SOICHI.

REEEE

REEEE

THIS IS SUCH A TIGHT SQUEEZE. IT'S CLEARLY MADE FOR SOICHI.

I CAN HEAR SOICHI THROUGH THE WALL MAKING HIS CICADA CALLS IN THE THIRD GAP.

REEEE

REEEE∞

WHERE'S THE OPENING TO GET THROUGH THE SECOND GAP?

REEEE

REEEE

REEEE
REEEE

REEEE
REEEE

REEEE

REEE

HEY!

KEE SHEE SHEE !

WHAT AN IDIOT HE IS, STUDYING SO HAPPILY IN THE TEENSY ROOM!

OKAY! HOW ABOUT I GIVE HIM ONE MORE!

BWAH HA HA HA HA HA HA!

HEH ...

I SAW RIGHT THROUGH YOUR LITTLE EVIL DEED!

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN!

AH! STOP!

GET OUT NOW!

YOU'RE NOT GET-TING AWAY!

KEE KEE KEE!

STOP, SOICHI!

SLAM

AN-OTHER OPEN-ING HERE?!

DAMMIT! QUIT FOOLING AROUND AND STOP ALREADY!

I'M GOING DOWN! KEH HEH HEH HEH!

I SAID, STOP!

KEH KEH KEH KEH KEH KEH!

RIPRIP

WAAAH!

AH! OW!

R

P

CAREFUL THERE. I BUILT THIS AREA FOR PACHINKO.

WHAT ?!

THUD

HA HA HA!

S- SOICHI!

BWAH HA HA HA HA!

YOU'VE GOT NO RESPECT FOR YOUR BROTHER!

DAMN YOU, SOICHI!

BWAH HA HA!

STOP RIGHT THERE!

AH!

DAMMIT!

SOICHI!

BWAH HA HA!

SLIP

PWAAAH!

EEEE! IT'S SO COLD!

WHAT IS THIS?! SOME KIND OF MUD POND?

SPLASH

IF I FOLLOW HIM ANY FARTHER I JUST KNOW THERE'LL BE A POISON SNAKE AREA OR A COCK-ROACH TRAP AREA OR SOME-THING.

NO. I'M ONLY PLAYING INTO HIS HANDS BY CHASING HIM.

BWAH HA HA! THAT'S THE SLIME SWAMP AREA!

HM? OH...

KOICHI! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

I CAN'T STAND THIS. I'M JUST GOING TO GO STUDY IN A DIFFERENT ROOM.

REEEE

EEEEEEER

HAAH! HAAH!

REEEE REEEE REEEE REEEE

REEEE

BWAH HA HA HA HA!

STILL, THOUGH, WHO WAS THAT MAN TAGAISU? WE NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN.

LATER, SOICHI WAS FOUND STRUGGLING TO BREATHE DUE TO A LACK OF OXYGEN BECAUSE HE'D BEEN YELLING FOR SOME TIME IN A CLOSED ROOM.

棺桶（かんおけ）

COFFIN

...OUR ENTIRE FAMILY HURRIED TO THE TOWN OF FUKAZAWA, WHERE KOICHI AND SAYURI LIVED.

WHEN WE HEARD THAT OUR GREAT-UNCLE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE HAD DIED SUDDENLY...

GOODNESS, THANK YOU SO MUCH. YOU MUST BE TIRED. PLEASE COME IN.

WE CAME FROM TOKYO STRAIGHT-AWAY.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE WERE HERE. WE WERE SO SURPRISED TO HEAR THAT MY UNCLE PASSED SO ABRUPTLY.

忌中

*IN MOURNING

GO IN AND SEE GRANDPA.

YUSUKE, MICHINA. IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU.

OH, SHIRO, YOU CAME. I KNOW IT'S QUITE THE TRIP.

WE'RE SO SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS.

HEY.

WAAAH! WAAAH!

WAAAH! WAAAH!

WAAAH! WAAAH!

KOICHI ...

YUSUKE, MICHINA. THANKS FOR COMING. WHY DON'T YOU SAY GOODBYE TO GRANDPA?

WAAAH!
WAAAH!

GRANDPA'S DEAD!
GRANDPA'S DEAD!

WAAAH!
WAAAH!

I MEAN, HE'S GLOOMY AND CREEPY. I THOUGHT HE WAS THE KIND OF KID TO GLOAT AT HIS FAMILY'S MISFORTUNE.

HE REALLY IS A REGULAR KID.

I NEVER IMAGINED HE'D BE CRYING.

HE'S CRYING SO MUCH.

WAAAH!
WAAAH!

SOICHI.

WAAAH! WAAAH!

SHIRO, THE FUNERAL'S TOMORROW. I'M SO GLAD YOU CAN BE HERE.

HIS FACE IS SO PEACEFUL.

I'M SURE HE DIDN'T SUFFER.

HE WAS GONE JUST LIKE THAT.

WELL, OF COURSE.

SAYURI, YOU COME, TOO.

WAAH! WAAH!

LET'S GO TO THE LIVING ROOM.

YUSUKE, MICHI.

BEFORE GRANDPA DIED, OKAY? THERE WAS THIS SIGN, LIKE A PREDICTION.

A SIGN?

SO, WELL... IT'S WEIRD.

BLEND Coffee

ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE HE DIED...

...

WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT NOW...

YEAH. IT WAS LIKE HE KNEW HE WAS GOING TO DIE.

HE STARTED THIS PROJECT IN THE GARDEN, WEIRDLY ENOUGH.

SAW

SAW

SAW

SAW

SAW

SAW

HM? OHH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. HA HA HA!

GRANDPA, WHAT'RE YOU DOING? MAKE SURE YOU DON'T GO TOO HARD AND HURT YOUR BACK.

HA HA HA!

...I'M MAKIN' A COFFIN!

SO? WHAT'RE YOU MAKING?

THIS? OH, WELL, YOU SEE...

BUT THE THING HE MADE WAS DEFINITELY A COFFIN.

AT FIRST, I THOUGHT HE WAS KIDDING.

A COFFIN ?!

...

BANG

BANG BANG BANG

GOTTA AT LEAST MAKE MY OWN COFFIN.

NOPE. THIS COFFIN'S FOR ME.

GRANDPA, WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING A THING LIKE THIS FOR?

DID ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS DIE OR SOMETHING?

I JUST WANT TO BE PUT INTO A COFFIN I MADE MYSELF WHEN I DO DIE.

HA HA HA! NO NEED TO WORRY. I'M NOT PLANNIN' ON DYIN' ANYTIME SOON.

SO I FIGURED I BETTER MAKE IT WHILE I STILL CAN.

BUT IT'S KIND OF CREEPY.

YES, EXACTLY. I MEAN, YOUR OWN COFFIN! YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE YOU'RE GONNA DIE SOON!

ENOUGH WITH THE BAD JOKE, GRANDPA! YOU'RE GOING TO JINX YOURSELF!

CHK
CHK
CHK

LOOK AT YOU ALL, CHATTING AWAY. HAVING FUN? WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I SAID THAT HE SHOULD STOP, IT'S BAD LUCK.

SO, LIKE, GRANDPA'S MAKING HIS OWN COFFIN.

WHAT'S WITH THE COFFIN ?

HEY, WHOA! THAT IS BAD LUCK.

WHAT? HIS OWN COFFIN?

RIGHT?

YOU KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK. MAKE YOURSELF A FINE COFFIN.

MAKING COFFINS IS A PRETTY COOL HOBBY.

HM? WHAT IS IT, SOICHI?

GRANDPA...

I WAS JUST SAYING IT'S GREAT THAT GRANDPA IS WORKING HARD AT SOMETHING. HE'S USUALLY SO IN THE BACKGROUND.

SAV-AGE.

THAT HURT. YOU ALWAYS CHOOSE VIOLENCE. THAT'S WHY I HATE YOU.

WHAP

YOU IDIOT! DON'T SAY THAT!

BANG BANG BANG BANG

...

HA HA HA! UNDERSTAND THEN, DO YOU, SOICHI?

RIGHT, GRAND-PA?

YEAH. HEH HEH HEH.

HEH HEH HEH.

NOT TOO SHABBY, HM?

SO? WHAT D'YOU THINK OF YOUR GRANDPA'S WORK?

HA HA HA! NOW THAT'S GOING A BIT TOO FAR.

IF YOU WENT INTO COFFIN MAKING, YOU'D BE THE BEST IN JAPAN.

I'D BE HAPPY TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

WE CAN PEEK AT YOUR DEAD FACE THROUGH THIS LITTLE WINDOW.

I WANT MY VERY OWN COFFIN.

NICE, A COFFIN. LUCKY. YOU GOT YOUR OWN COFFIN. NICE.

WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT? YOU'RE STILL A BOY. DON'T NEED ONE YET.

HEY, GRANDPA? I WANT A COFFIN, TOO.

YEAH. BUT IT'S MY DREAM TO SLEEP IN A COFFIN INSTEAD OF A BED.

YOU KNOW, THERE'S ALWAYS THAT SCENE IN FOREIGN MOVIES. WHERE THE VAMPIRE'S SLEEPING IN A COFFIN? THAT'S THE DREAM.

HMM. BUT...

COME ON, GRAND-PA.

MAKE ME A TOTALLY OMINOUS COFFIN. OKAY? YOU WILL, RIGHT?

HEY, GRANDPA? MAKE ME A COFFIN, TOO. LIKE THE ONE DRACULA USES.

WHAT D'YOU THINK OF THIS, SOICHI?

PHEW ...

BAMBAMBAMBAM

GRANDPA WAS SUCH A NICE GUY, SO HE ENDED UP MAKING A COFFIN FOR SOICHI.

LISTEN, GRANDPA. I SAID TO MAKE ME A WESTERN-STYLE COFFIN, LIKE THE ONE DRACULA HAS.

I MEAN, A VAMPIRE WANDERS THE NIGHT IN SEARCH OF THE FRESH BLOOD OF BEAUTIFUL GIRLS. WHAT DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WILL SAY IF HE'S SLEEPING IN A JAPANESE COFFIN?

REALLY SOME-THING, AIN'T SHE?

OKAY? DO IT OVER.

I GUESS YOU WOULDN'T. THE WEST-ERN ONES, THEY'RE HEXAGO-NAL.

OH...SO YOU DON'T LIKE IT. BUT I DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT WESTERN COFFINS.

I'LL BE THE LAUGHING-STOCK OF THE NEIGH-BORHOOD.

SOICHI, I GOT IT THIS TIME, RIGHT?

PHEW.

SAWSAWSAWSAW

HE COULD'VE JUST QUIT, BUT HE WENT ALONG WITH SOICHI'S STUPID REQUEST AND STARTED BUILDING AGAIN.

HEH ...

IT IS DEFI-NITELY A HEXA-GON.

BWAH HA HA HA HA HA!

HOW ABOUT IT?

BUT THE GOD OF DEATH WILL NOT SIT IDLY BY WHEN LORD ME IS SCORNED!

OF COURSE NOT! YOU MADE THAT TO MAKE ME LAUGH, RIGHT?!

W-WHAT? YOU DON'T LIKE THIS ONE, EITHER?

SUCH A STUPID JOKE.

NGAH!

ENOUGH, SOICHI!

GAAAH!

A GUY LIKE YOU NEEDS TO SPEND A LITTLE TIME IN HERE!

SHUT UP! WHAT DO YOU THINK GRANDPA IS, ANYWAY?

OWWW! KOICHI! STOP IT!

YOU'RE STRETCH-ING MY EAR!

KAPOK

EEP!

AAH!

GRANDPA! DON'T DO ANYTHING THIS IDIOT SAYS ANYMORE.

THAT'S RIGHT. DON'T LISTEN TO HIM.

THIS IS TOO MUCH EVEN FOR YOU!

OPEN UP! LET ME OUT!

AND THEN, THAT NIGHT... GRANDPA WAS DEAD.

I BET HE WANTED A MORE PEACEFUL DEATH.

I FEEL BAD FOR HIM THAT THAT DODO WAS MAKING HIM RUN AROUND IN THE LAST DAYS OF HIS LIFE.

MAYBE PEOPLE KNOW WHEN THE END OF THEIR LIFE'S COMING.

HE LOVED HIM, OKAY?

I MEAN, SOICHI *WAS* CRYING BECAUSE HIS GRANDPA'S DEAD.

STOP IT, MICHINA.

W-WHEN I SAW SOICHI CRYING BACK THERE, I THOUGHT MAYBE I WAS WRONG ABOUT HIM. BUT NOW I'M ACTUALLY DISGUSTED.

WAAAAAAH!
WAAAAAAAH!

SOICHI ...

WAAAAH!
WAAAH!

GRANDPA'S DEAD!

WAAAH!
WAAAAAH!

I KNOW YOU'RE SAD... IT'S SAD, BUT YOU'RE A BOY. YOU HAVE TO BE A BIT STRONGER.

WHAT?

UNCLE. IF I STOP CRYING, WILL YOU MAKE ME A WESTERN-STYLE COFFIN?

...

W—

...

WAAAAAH!

WAAAAAH!

SOICHI! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING TO YOUR UNCLE?! YOU STOP THIS TALK RIGHT NOW!

JAPANESE IS NO GOOD.

YEAH.

A WESTERN COFFIN?

WAAAAAH!
WAAAAAH!

WAAAAAH!
WAH! WAH!
WAAAAAH!
WAAAAAH!

HERE WE GO.

SHIRO, READY?

SLOWLY. TAKE IT SLOW.

PLEASE ACCEPT MY CONDOLENCES FOR YOUR LOSS.

?

NEUROS-
PORA
CRASSA.

NEUROS-
PORA
GRASSA.

PHEW. THIS IS HOW HE WANTED IT, TO BE SENT OFF IN THE COFFIN HE MADE.

NEUROS-
PORA
GRASSA.

NEUROS-
PORA
CRASSA
...

NEUROS-
PORA
BRASSA.

NEUROS-
PORA
BRASSA.

GRANDPA STILL HAS WORK LEFT TO DO IN THIS WORLD.

OH, THIS, YOU SEE, IT'S A SPELL TO BRING THE DEAD BACK TO LIFE.

NEUROSPORA CRASSA, NEUROSPORA GRASSA, NEUROSPORA BRASSA.

NEUROSPORA CRASSA... NEUROSPORA GRASSA... NEUROSPORA BRASSA...

SOICHI, WHAT'RE YOU MUTTERING ABOUT?

NEUROSPORA CRASSA, NEUROSPORA BRASSA... THIS IS A REAL TONGUE TWISTER.

NEUROSPORA CRASSA, NEUROSPORA GRASSA.

POOR THING. SOICHI REALLY DID ADORE HIS GRAND-FATHER, HM?

NEUROSPORA CRASSA, NEUROSPORA GRASSA, NEUROSPORA BRASSA...

BARK BARK

AHWOOO ARF ARF

UGH. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT...

I HAVE TO PEE.

DONG DONG

POP

TIK TIK

NOD

NOD

CREAK

CREAK

NOD

NOD

TO GET TO THE BATHROOM IN THIS HOUSE, YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH A BASEMENT HALLWAY.

THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE KEEPING A VIGIL FOR THE WAKE. BUT THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP.

PLAP PLAP PLAP

BANG BANG BANG

BANG BANG BANG BANG

BANG

IT'S COMING FROM THE STORAGE ROOM.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE HAMMERING.

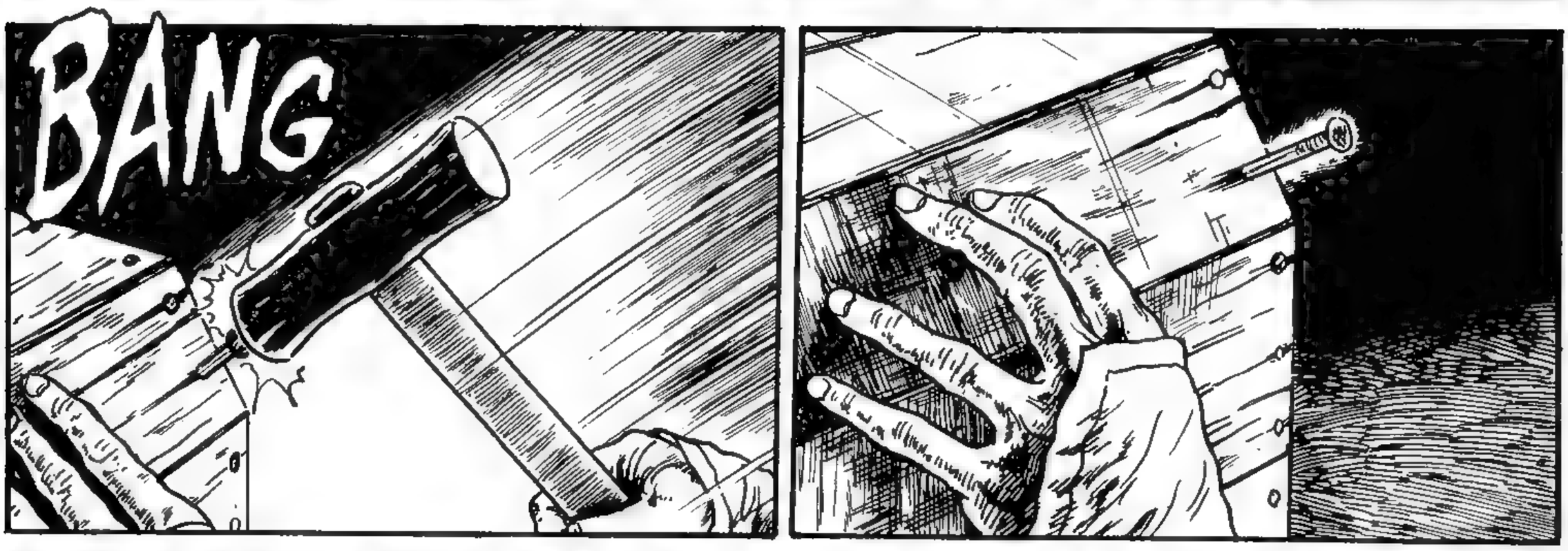
AND ON THE NIGHT OF THE WAKE!

HE'S PROBABLY BACK AT IT.

WAIT. THIS HAS HAPPENED ONCE BEFORE.

THAT TIME, SOICHI WAS HAMMERING SPIKES INTO A DOLL IN THERE.

BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG


BANG

OH
HO

OH
HO
HO HO

MICHINA ?!

WHAT HAPPENED ?!

AAAAAAAAH!

AAAAAAH!

NO, DAD! HE'S IN THERE! HE WAS HAMMERING A NAIL!

WHAT?! THERE'S NO ONE HERE!

IT'S GRANDPA!

GRANDPA'S IN THERE! IN THE STORAGE ROOM!

IT IS A COFFIN. WHAT IS A COFFIN DOING IN HERE?

COFFIN ?!

IT WAS HIM! HIS MOUTH AND NOSE WERE STUFFED WITH COTTON!

HE WAS HAMMERING AT THAT COFFIN THING!

DON'T BE SILLY. THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD BE DOWN HERE. HE'S DEAD.

BUT IT'S TRUE!

?!

KRAFTED

IT WASN'T HERE THIS AFTERNOON.

SKREE SKREE

KLAK

SKREE SKREE SKREE

WHAT ARE YOU ALL DOING DOWN HERE?

...

AAAAH!

KLATHUNK

BUT THE SHAPE'S A LITTLE OFF, SO IT'S NOT GREAT TO SLEEP IN.

HUH? OHH. THIS? IT'S THE COFFIN GRANDPA MADE ME.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

S-SOICHI... DON'T SCARE US LIKE THAT!

I MEAN, A DEAD PERSON CAN'T DO CARPENTRY WORK. HEH HEH HEH.

BY THE WAY, A CERTAIN SOMEONE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT HOW GRANDPA WAS MAKING IT NOW. BUT THAT WAS ALL IN HER HEAD.

...WHY WAS EVERYONE AT THE WAKE ASLEEP?

I GUESS MY EYES MUST HAVE BEEN PLAYING TRICKS. BUT...

SOICHI WAS RIGHT. WE CHECKED RIGHT AFTER THAT, AND GRANDPA'S BODY WAS IN THE COFFIN. HE WAS INDEED DEAD.

SHOULDN'T THEY HAVE WOKEN UP WHEN THE BODY WENT TO MAKE A COFFIN FOR SOICHI?

FINALLY, IT WAS TIME FOR THE CREMATION IN A FACILITY IN TOWN.

BUT NO ONE WOULD HAVE BELIEVED ME IF I'D MENTIONED THAT. MORNING CAME AND THE FUNERAL STARTED.

KLATTER KLATTER KLATTER

SOB SOB SOB.

DEAR FAMILY, PLEASE SAY YOUR FINAL GOOD-BYES.

SNIF-FLE SNIF-FLE.

SLAM

MAYBE GRANDPA WASN'T REALLY DEAD.

I DES-PERATELY REJECTED THIS DOUBT IN MY HEART.

BMPF

KACHAK

...

PLEASE REST IN PEACE.

KATUNK

LOOKS LIKE IT'S DONE.

HUH ?

KNK KNK KNK

KREEE

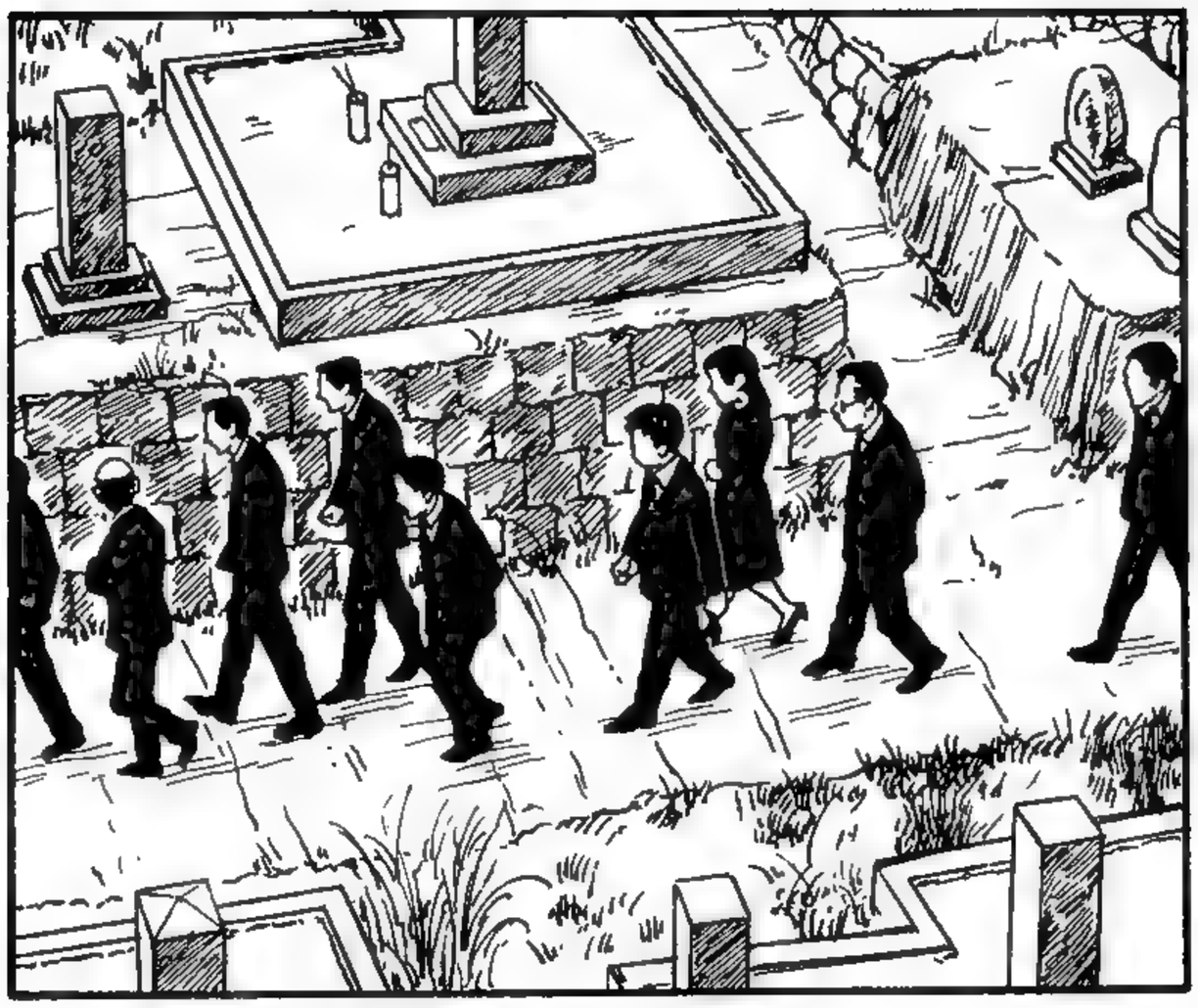
WHAT HAPPENED ?

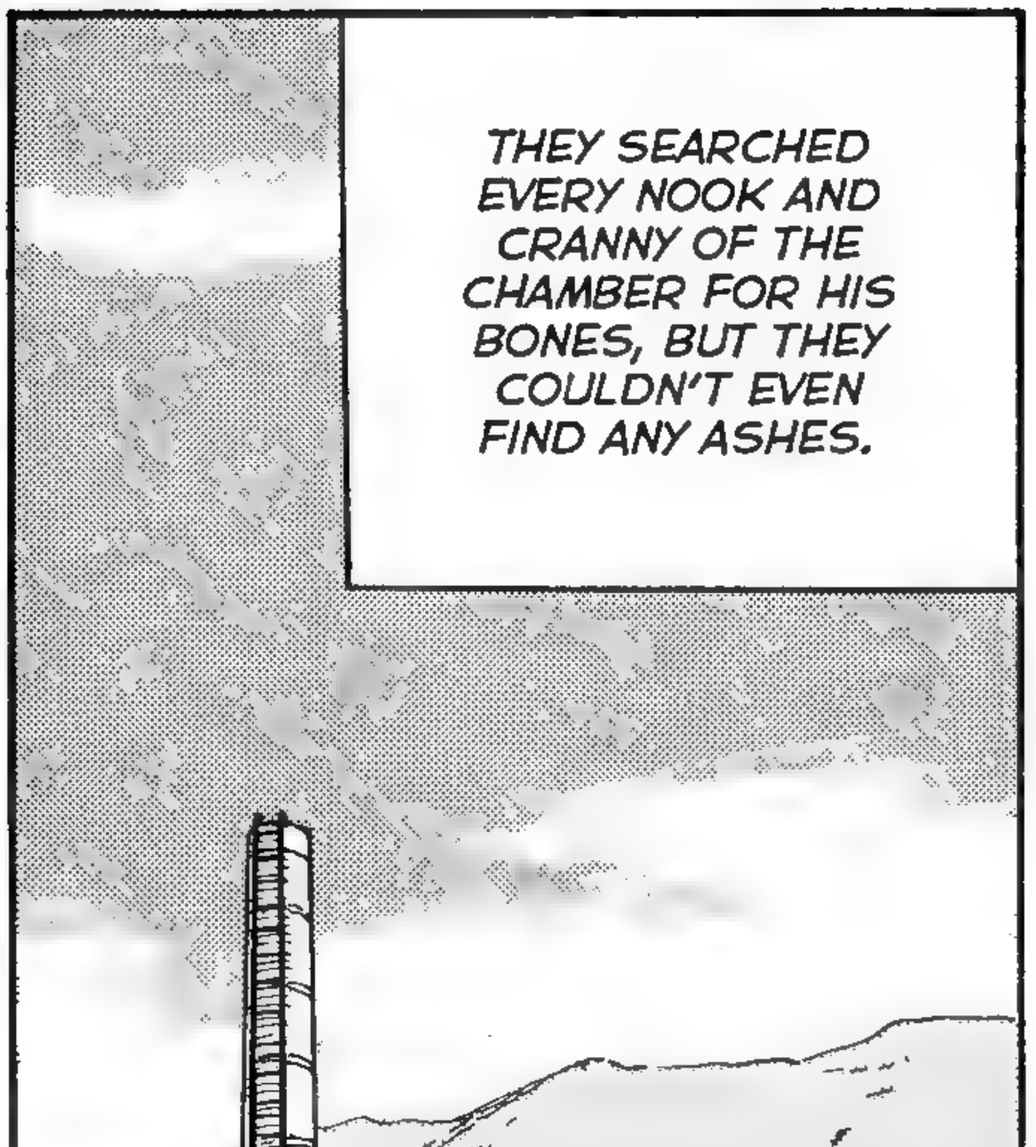
WELL, THIS...

MURMUR

WHAT ?

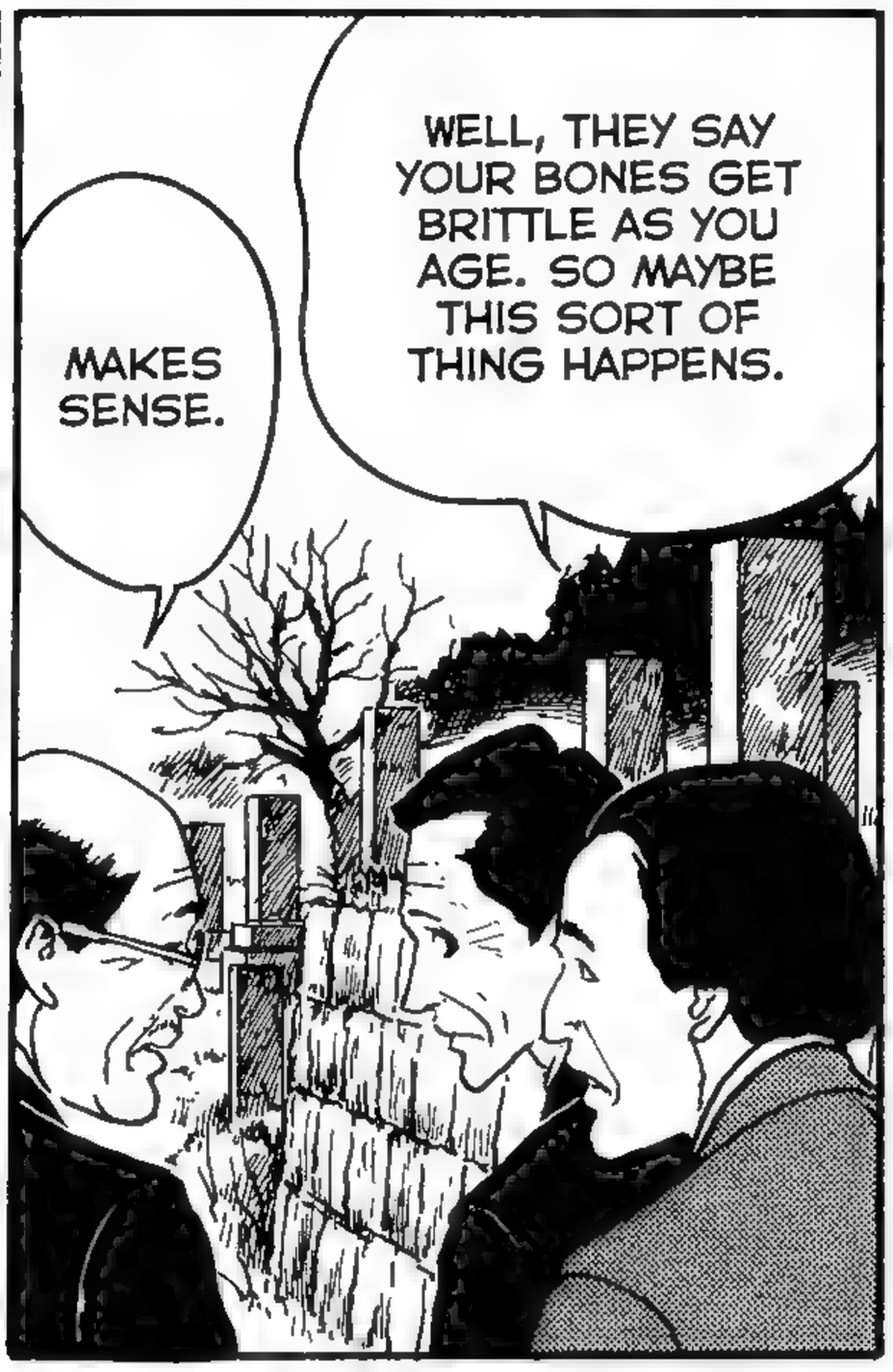
THERE ARE NO BONES OR ASHES.




THEY SEARCHED EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY OF THE CHAMBER FOR HIS BONES, BUT THEY COULDN'T EVEN FIND ANY ASHES.

YES. IT DOES FEEL THAT WAY.
FEELS LIKE THE DEVIL'S PLAYING TRICKS ON US.

MIGHT BE. I'M SURE THAT'S IT.
I SUPPOSE THE FIRE WAS TOO HOT.


MAKES SENSE.
WELL, THEY SAY YOUR BONES GET BRITTLE AS YOU AGE. SO MAYBE THIS SORT OF THING HAPPENS.

I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THERE BEING NO BONES!

IT'S ABSURD!

I'M SURE THE OPERATOR MESSED UP!

?!

THAT'S ...

IT'S THE FELLOW WALKING BEHIND US. WHO EXACTLY IS HE?

HM? AND WHAT'S THAT?

NOT TOO SURE WHY. BUT SOMETHING'S BEEN EATING AT ME FOR A BIT NOW.

WHAT?

PLAP
PLAP
之墓
之墓
K-
KOFF...
...
HM?
MARCH MARCH
HEY?
GLANCE
MARCH MARCH

...

...

THAT?

THAT. LOOK.

HM? WHAT'S WRONG?

WELL NOW! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

WHY...IF IT ISN'T MR. TSUJII!

HELLO!

H—

RIGHT, EVERY-ONE?

A-AH, IS THAT IT? NO BONES! BECAUSE YOU'RE RIGHT HERE!

MY WORD, THAT'S GREAT! MARVELOUS!

MY GOODNESS, YOU GAVE US A FRIGHT. I HEARD YOU PASSED AWAY SUDDENLY!

PLEASE... SAY SOMETHING.

N-NOW, MR. TSUJII...

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

YOU'RE QUITE COLD...

OH!

POST-MORTEM LIVIDITY ...

COFFIN.

COFFIN.

TMP

AAH.

OH MY.

AAAAAH!

COFFIN.

COFFIN.

GRAND-PA...

HOW'S IT LOOK THIS TIME?

SOICHI.

...AND BUILT COFFINS IN THE BASEMENT.

AFTER THAT, GRANDPA CRAWLED UP FROM THE FLOOR NIGHT AFTER NIGHT...

BANG BANG

THE STORAGE ROOM IS FULL OF COFFINS.

BANG BANG

ONCE HE GETS THE OKAY FROM SOICHI, THEN HE REALLY WILL DIE, APPARENTLY.

DO IT AGAIN.

NO GOOD.

COFFIN/END

RUMORS

噂 (うわさ)

SUCH A FOOL.

DOES STUPID SAYURI THINK SHE'S GOING TO BE A MODEL OR SOMETHING?

FLIP FLIP FLIP

HEH! SHE'S ONLY IN JUNIOR HIGH AND SHE THINKS SHE CAN HAVE SUCH MATURE STUFF!

I FOUND THIS FASHION MAGAZINE WHEN I WAS RUMMAGING AROUND IN SAYURI'S ROOM.

beautiful Lady

ビューティフル レディ

4月号

この春一番

ヘアスタイル特集

HM?!

FLIP

SHE'S AN EXTREMELY CREEPY BEAUTIFUL LADY.

W- WHAT'S WITH THIS MODEL?

beautiful Lady

ビューティフル レディ

4月号

SPRING

MORNING, MIDORI!

MORN-ING!

6TH GRADE CLASS 1

MORNING, MADOKA.

MORNING, MIDORI.

MY NAME IS MIDORI SAKIYAMA. I'M IN SIXTH GRADE AT FUKAZAWA ELEMEN-TARY.

MORN-ING!

PEOPLE SAY WE COULD BE ACTORS OR MODELS IN THE FUTURE.

THAT'S MADOKA TANIYAMA. THERE'S AN ONGOING RUMOR THAT SHE AND I ARE NECK-AND-NECK FOR CUTEST IN THE CLASS.

AND THE PROOF OF THAT IS THE FACT THAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIP WITH OTSUKA LATELY.

BUT I THINK I'M ACTUALLY THE CUTEST.

I WAS TEASED A WHOLE BUNCH, BUT I WAS HAPPY! HE HAD TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL LAST WEEK, THOUGH, BECAUSE OF SOME MYSTERIOUS STOMACH PAIN.

HE'S STILL THERE NOW.

THAT RUMOR ABOUT US PROVED THAT I AM THE CUTEST, I BELIEVE.

THE MOST HANDSOME BOY IN OUR GRADE, OTSUKA IS THE OBJECT OF ALL THE GIRLS' AFFECTION.

CHK CHK CHK

CHK CHK CHK

GIGGLE!

HE MUTTERS TO HIMSELF, SOMETIMES GIGGLES. CREEPY RUMORS.

AS FOR RUMORS, THERE AREN'T TOO MANY GOOD ONES ABOUT SOICHI. HE'S SUPER GLOOMY.

DOES HE NOT KNOW THE THINGS PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HIM?

WHAT'S SO DELIGHT-FUL?

TRULY DELIGHT-FUL.

HEE HEE HEE. GOOD IDEA.

BUT I HEARD HE ACTUALLY HAS THEM TO HAMMER INTO STRAW DOLLS.

BANG

BANG

*Don't try this at home.

ESPECIALLY THOSE NAILS. THE GROWN-UPS SAY HE SUCKS ON THEM BECAUSE HE HAS AN IRON DEFICIENCY OR SOMETHING.

CHK CHK CHK

...

HM?

HEH HEH HEH. LA LA LA!

CHK CHK

FWD

FANGS. I HAVE FANGS.

GRIN

HEH HEH HEH. LOOK...

SHE... SHE IGNORED ME.

...

CAN I JOIN IN?

HEY, SO WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

...

I GUESS IT'S IN A MAGA-ZINE.

HEY! SO IS IT TRUE THAT KENTARO KAGAWA FROM SMOGS IS DATING THE ACTOR ANNA HOSOKAWA?

WHOA!

STILL, WE LOVED TO GOSSIP.

SOICHI'S JOG-GING?! NO WAY!

SUDDEN TOPIC CHANGE!

OH, RIGHT! SO ANYWAY, DID YOU HEAR? SOICHI'S GOING JOGGING EVERY MORNING.

HA HA HA HA! NOT A CHANCE!

I ALWAYS THOUGHT SOICHI WAS SO GLOOMY, BUT WHAT IF HE'S A SURPRISINGLY UPBEAT GUY?

TOTAL FAKE-OUT!

WHAT? I CAN'T PICTURE THAT AT ALL.

IT'S TRUE! I GUESS SOMEONE SAW HIM JOGGING AND DELIVERING PAPERS.

WHAT? YOU MEAN IT'S TRUE?!

AH, CRUD. WHO BLABBED IT? HEY, KEEP IT TO YOURSELVES, OKAY?

NOT A CHANCE! HE'S NOT THE TYPE.

HEY, SOICHI! IS IT TRUE YOU'RE DELIVERING PAPERS?

HUH?

WHOA. ADMI-RABLE.

SO, LIKE, YESTERDAY, SOICHI WAS HOLDING THE HAND OF SOME OLD LADY AND HELPING HER CROSS THE STREET.

HEY, YOU HEAR? SO, LIKE, SOICHI, OKAY?

HE'S DELIVERING PAPERS, RIGHT?

I WONDER HOW COME?

LATELY, THERE HAVE BEEN A LOT OF GOOD RUMORS ABOUT SOICHI.

NO WAY! YOU'RE KIDDING ME. HE HASN'T GOT AN ATHLETIC BONE IN HIS BODY.

NO, NOT THAT! I'M TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE. HE WAS PINCH-HITTING IN A GROWN-UP BASEBALL GAME, AND HE GOT A HOME RUN!

WHAAAAT?! NO WAY!

JUST STAY CALM AND LISTEN! SO, SOICHI, OKAY? I HEARD HE'S THE *COUSIN* OF KENTARO KAGAWA FROM SMOGS!

WHAT? WHAT'S GOING ON?

AAH! HOLY SMOKES! HUGE NEWS!

EEEE! I WANT ONE, TOO!

HEY, YOU TWO! HOLD UP! WE'RE NOT DONE CLEANING!

YES WAY! EVERYONE'S IN THE CLASSROOM NOW, BUGGING HIM FOR AUTOGRAPHS.

WELL, I GUESS I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE. FINE. I'LL GET HIS AUTOGRAPH FOR YOU ALL.

I DUNNO. HOW DID YOU ALL FIND OUT? I WAS KEEPING THE WHOLE KENTARO THING A SECRET.

BECAUSE I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN.

YOU'RE REALLY PUTTING ME IN A TIGHT SPOT.

6TH GRADE CLASS 1

HMM. AN AUTO-GRAPH, *HUH?*

YEAH. YOU'RE COUSINS! JUST GET HIM TO DO IT!

DON'T ACT SO HOT!

CHANGED THEIR TUNE PRETTY QUICK.

HMPH. WHAT'S ALL THIS "I LOVE YOU, SOICHI" ?

BING BONG

BING BONG

I'LL MAKE LIKE I COULD ONLY GET ONE AUTOGRAPH.

GIGGLE! I JUST HAD A GREAT IDEA.

MAKE THEM FIGHT EACH OTHER FOR IT. A BLOODBATH SOUNDS GOOD.

EEEEE! I LOVE YOU, SOICHI!

YOU'RE THE BEST, SOICHI!

HOSPITAL

Internal Medicine
Pediatrics
Neurology

THE NEXT DAY...

TAKADA HOSPITAL

TAKADA HOSPITAL

NO, I'LL GO.

BUT BRINGING FLOWERS... WHAT IF HE LAUGHS AT ME?

I DON'T KNOW. I MEAN, I CAME ALL THIS WAY.

KACHAK

...

HELLO?

210
Hironobu Otsuka

2F

AH!

OH.

HI.

SAKI-YAMA!

OTSUKA!

UH-HUH. I WAS PASSING BY, SO...

MADOKA. YOU'RE HERE, TOO?

OH, MIDORI...

TODAY'S A SPECIAL DAY. I MEAN, *TWO* GIRLS COMING TO VISIT ME!

ARE YOU ALL BETTER NOW?

YEAH. I'M A LOT BETTER.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BOTHER, THOUGH.

SO THEY ADMITTED ME. THEY STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT CAUSED IT, BUT THE PAIN'S A LOT LESS NOW, SO I'LL BE ABLE TO GO HOME SOON.

I GOT THIS SHARP PAIN IN MY STOMACH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. MAYBE AROUND TWO OR THREE. THE DEAD OF NIGHT...

I GUESS SOICHI KEPT A KID FROM GETTING HIT BY A CAR AT THE LAST SECOND.

SOMEONE CAME THIS MORNING, TOLD ME ALL ABOUT IT. I WAS SURPRISED.

WHEN THE PRINCIPAL HEARD, HE WAS SUPER IMPRESSED.

IT'S NO BIG DEAL. ANYWAY, I HEARD THERE'S ALL KINDS OF RUMORS ABOUT SOICHI AT SCHOOL NOW!

THAT IS WORRYING. I MEAN, NOT KNOWING WHY.

MAYBE SHE LIKED HIM.

BUT I WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH THE FACT THAT TANIYAMA HAD BEEN IN OTSUKA'S HOSPITAL ROOM.

SOICHI WAS A HERO NOW.

AT ASSEMBLY THE NEXT MORNING, THE PRINCIPAL PRAISED SOICHI IN FRONT OF THE ENTIRE STUDENT BODY.

BING BONG
BING BONG

OR MAYBE SHE WAS JUST BEING NICE AND VISITING.

WHAT'S HE HIDING THERE FOR?

THAT'S WHY!

HA HA HA!

HUH? THAT'S SOICHI.

MIDORI SAKIYAMA IN GRADE SIX, CLASS ONE...

AND SO THEN, MY MOM, OKAY?

HA HA HA HA!

...LIKES SOICHI, APPAR-ENTLY.

SHE TOTALLY FREAKED OUT ON ME. IT SUCKED.

THAT DOES SUCK! HA HA HA HA!

MIDORI SAKIYAMA IN GRADE SIX CLASS ONE...

...LIKES SOICHI, APPAR-ENTLY.

6TH GRADE CLASS 1

HEY! EVERY-BODY!

BIG NEWS!

...

...LIKES SOICHI.

MIDORI SAKI-YAMA...

?!

WHAT? REALLY?!

I HEARD SAKIYAMA AND SOICHI ARE DOING IT!

HEY, STOP RIGHT THERE!

H—

HERO AND HEROINE. THE PERFECT COUPLE?!

WHOA! THAT'S HOT NEWS!

I SAW HIM WHISPERING NEAR SOME KIDS, CLOSE ENOUGH FOR THEM TO HEAR! HE'S PLANTING RUMORS.

LISTEN TO ME! I FINALLY GET IT NOW. SOICHI'S THE ONE SPREADING THOSE RUMORS!

I'LL TELL YOU RIGHT NOW! I HATE YOU! I WISH YOU WERE DEAD!

THAT'S A LIE! I'M SERIOUS! WHY WOULD I BE DOING IT WITH A GUY LIKE THAT? GROSS!

HE MIGHT'VE TOTALLY MADE UP ALL THE "GOOD RUMORS" ABOUT HIM!

HNGH!

COME ON, SOICHI! DID YOU MAKE IT UP?

AH! SO THEN THAT ONE ABOUT BEING KENTARO KAGAWA'S COUSIN, TOO?!

FOR REAL, SOICHI?

WHAT? IS THAT WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON?!

GEH HEH HEH.

GEH.

I *THOUGHT* IT WAS WEIRD.

AAAH, BUT THE ONLY THING IS, THERE'S JUST THE ONE!

THE PROOF IS THIS AUTO-GRAPH HERE.

YOU'D DO BETTER TO BE NICE TO ME. KENTARO REALLY IS MY COUSIN.

LET ME SEE THAT!

SNATCH

TA-DA!

IT'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM HIS SIGNATURE IN MAGAZINES AND STUFF.

SMOGS KENTARI KAGAWA

W-WHAT IS THIS UGLY SCRAWL?

HEY! THIS IS SOICHI'S HANDWRITING. IDIOT. SO IT *WAS* A LIE!

AND HIS NAME'S SPELLED WRONG.

HIS STANDING WENT WAY DOWN, SO HE SKIPPED OUT.

OVER THERE. HE'S RUNNING AWAY.

WHERE'D HE GO?!

HA HA HA!

OF COURSE IT WAS. AS IF THAT GUY WOULD BE HELPING LITTLE KIDS OR HAVE A FAMOUS COUSIN!

...

HA HA HA! WHAT A DUMMY!

AH! LOOK! HE'S CHECKING US OUT FROM THE END OF THE HALLWAY!

...ON THE BOARD IN OUR CLASS-ROOM.

CHATTER CHATTER

...A STRANGE PHOTO WAS PUT UP...

A FEW DAYS LATER...

A HORROR MAGAZINE?

HEY, WHAT IS THAT? IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S FROM A MAGAZINE.

AH! I KNOW HER!

SERI-OUSLY. WHAT IS IT?

IT'S SO... THAT FACE IS SO CREEPY.

A MODEL? HER?!

I'VE SEEN THIS WOMAN BEFORE. IN THIS FASHION MAGAZINE MY MOM BOUGHT. SHE'S A MODEL!

DON'T GO YELLING. YOU SCARED ME.

YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT? HOW COULD THERE BE SUCH A CREEPY MODEL?!

BUT IT'S TRUE! THIS IS A LIPSTICK AD. A FOR-REAL ONE. SHE'S A MODEL. MY LITTLE SISTER SAW THIS AND COULDN'T GET OUT OF BED FOR A WEEK.

WHO PUT IT ON THE BOARD? HURRY UP AND TAKE IT DOWN.

EEK! I FEEL A CHILL!

LUSCIOUS SPRING COLORS

Lip Beauty

YOU KNOW THAT ALLEY RIGHT BEFORE YAMADA STATIONERY? THEY WERE GOING BY THERE.

THE THREE OF THEM WALKING, RIGHT? AND THERE SHE WAS.

SO, LISTEN. THESE THREE FOURTH GRADERS WERE GOING HOME WHEN, LIKE...

THE STRANGE RUMOR WHISPERED AROUND SCHOOL...

... STARTED A FEW DAYS AFTER THAT.

...THE WOMAN SPOKE TO THEM.

THEY COULDN'T GET THROUGH UNLESS SHE MOVED. BUT THEY WERE TOO CREEPED OUT TO SAY ANYTHING, SO THEY HAD GIVEN UP AND TURNED AROUND WHEN...

SHE SAID, "AM I PRETTY?"

THEY SAID SHE WAS JUST STANDING THERE, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DARK ALLEY.

AND IT WAS DARK, SO THEY COULDN'T SEE HER FACE TOO GOOD. BUT SHE WAS SUPER TALL.

...THEIR EYES ADJUSTED TO THE DARKNESS, AND THE WOMAN'S FACE GRADUALLY CAME INTO VIEW. BUT THAT FACE...

WHILE THEY WERE CREEPED OUT AND WONDERING WHAT TO DO...

THEY FREAKED AND RAN.

THEY SAID IT WAS UNBELIEVEABLE, LIKE NOTHING THEY'D EVER SEEN!

SCREAMING, "I'M GOING TO CATCH YOU AND EAT YOU!"

DOWN THIS NARROW ALLEY, HER HAIR FLYING, AT IMPOSSIBLE SPEED...

SO THEN THE WOMAN WENT CHASING AFTER THEM!

I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS, BUT THEY'RE OKAY.

LIKE THEY MADE IT TO A STREET WITH LOTS OF PEOPLE.

OR THEY RAN INTO A GAP TOO SMALL FOR THAT WOMAN OR SOMETHING.

WHAT?! SO WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE KIDS?!

HEY. DID YOU HEAR THAT STORY?

THIS CREEPY RUMOR IMMEDIATELY SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL.

YOU KNOW. THE ONE ON THE BLACKBOARD THAT TIME!

WHAT PIC-TURE?

SO I GUESS IT WAS...THE WOMAN FROM THAT PICTURE, MAYBE.

WHAAAT ?!

AND WITH NEW WITNESSES ADDED TO THE MIX, IT WAS ALL ANYONE COULD TALK ABOUT.

SHE WAS STANDING IN THE ALLEY?

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I HEARD.

THE CREEPY MODEL?!

HOW SHOULD I KNOW? BUT PEOPLE HAVE SEEN HER, OKAY!

BUT, LIKE, I MEAN, MODELS LIVE IN TOKYO OR SOME CITY SOMEWHERE! WHY WOULD SHE BE IN THIS SMALL TOWN?

SO THEN THAT'S WHY THIS MODEL'S IN TOWN.

THIS WAS NEWS TO ME, BUT I GUESS THAT SWAMP'S PRETTY FAMOUS. SOAKING IN IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR SKIN, APPARENTLY. SHE'S A MODEL, SO NO SURPRISE SHE'D BE INTO THAT.

WHAT? IS THAT TRUE?!

HEY, SO... DID YOU HEAR?

I GUESS IT REALLY IS THAT MODEL. I HEARD SHE CAME BECAUSE OF OTOMEGAFUCHI ON THE EDGE OF TOWN.

BUT IT'S COMPLETELY MADE-UP, SO I'M ASKING YOU ALL TO STOP TALKING ABOUT IT.

IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'VE ALL BEEN ON EDGE LATELY ABOUT A STRANGE RUMOR.

...AND KIDS STARTED TO STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL OUT OF FEAR.

THE RUMOR OF THE WOMAN IN THE ALLEY SPREAD AND SPREAD...

THIS IS THE SAME THING, SO YOU CAN ALL RELAX.

A RUMOR SPREAD ALL OVER JAPAN ABOUT A WOMAN APPEARING ON STREET CORNERS WHOSE MOUTH WAS SLIT UP TO HER EARS. BUT IT WAS ENTIRELY MADE-UP.

THE "KUCHISAKE-ONNA." HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT IT?

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW THIS, BUT THERE WAS A SIMILAR INCIDENT YEARS AGO.

HE'S A BIT BEHIND, SO YOU'LL ALL HAVE TO HELP HIM CATCH UP.

OTSUKA'S BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL FOR A WHILE, BUT HE'S FINALLY BACK IN CLASS.

HI.

AND NOW I HAVE SOME HAPPY NEWS.

HM? YEAH.

RIGHT, MIDORI?

TOTALLY. IT'S LIKE, WHO EVEN CARES ABOUT THE RUMOR OF A MONSTER.

MAN, WHEN OTSUKA'S HERE, THE SCHOOL FEELS A WHOLE LOT BRIGHTER, Y'KNOW?

YOU KNOW HOW PEOPLE ARE SAYING YOU'LL BE BEAUTIFUL IF YOU BATHE IN THE SWAMP?

SHE'S BEEN GOING OUT THERE SECRETLY.

THAT GIRL! I GUESS SHE GOT INTO THE MUCK AT OTOMEGA-FUCHI.

I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING. WHAT IS IT?

SPEAKING OF RUMORS, DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT MADOKA?

IT'S LOVE!

TAKE A LOOK THERE.

THE REASON SHE'D GO THAT FAR TO BE PRETTY ...

AND I MEAN, EVEN IF YOU BELIEVED IT, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GO BATHING IN ALL THAT MUCK.

BUT THAT WHOLE SWAMP THING'S JUST A RUMOR, RIGHT?

SHE'S TOTALLY BEEN STARING AT OTSUKA THIS WHOLE TIME.

SO, MIDORI? IF YOU DON'T STEP UP YOUR GAME, SHE'S GOING TO WALK OFF WITH HIM!

SHE MUST BE GOING OUT TO THE SWAMP.

AND NOW THAT I'M THINKING ABOUT IT, SHE'S PRETTIER THAN BEFORE.

SO IT'S TRUE THEN.

TO GET OTSUKA TO NOTICE HER.

SHE LIKES OTSUKA.

NO. I COULDN'T STAND IT. I CAN'T LET HER BEAT ME.

MADOKA AND OTSUKA MIGHT BE A RUMOR SOON ENOUGH.

KSH

AS IF SHE COULD BEAT ME!

I MEAN, I...

SLRM

SPLCH

IT'S NEARING WINTER, BUT THE SWAMP'S WEIRDLY LUKEWARM.

BUT I HAVE TO TOUGH IT OUT.

...

IF IT MEANS I'LL BE MORE BEAUTIFUL.

I HATE THIS! THAT SCARED ME!

AAAH!

SPLOSH

I GOT YOU! I GOTCHOOOO!

HYA HYA HYA HYA!

KSH

JUST AS I EXPECTED, YOU GOT INTO THE SWAMP! YOU SLIMY GIRL!

KEH KEH KEH! I FOLLOWED YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

S-SOICHI ...

THAT PICTURE OF THE MODEL WAS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN I EXPECTED.

THE MONSTER IN THE ALLEY, MADOKA TANIYAMA BATHING IN THE SWAMP—ALL OF IT WAS LIES SPREAD BY LORD ME!

THAT'S NOT HAPPENING! I'M GOING TO TELL THE WHOLE SCHOOL THAT YOU WERE BATHING IN THE SWAMP!

HEH HEH HEH. THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR MAKING A FOOL OF ME!

H-HEY! STOP IT!

SNAP

SNAP

QUIT TAKING MY PICTURE!

SNAP

NOT STOP-PING!

SNAP

HEH HEH HEH!

EEEEEE! I SAID QUIT IT, YOU PERV!

MWAH HA HA HA HA!

SNAP

SNAP

AH! YOU CALLED ME A PERVERT?! WELL, I'M GOING TO THROW YOUR CLOTHES INTO THE SWAMP! YOU CAN GO TRUDGE HOME COVERED IN FILTH!

SNAP

SNAP

FLAP FLAP FLAP

FWWSH

HM?

HM.

HUH? ALL THE BIRDS FLEW AWAY.

HM?

W-
WHAT?

FOCUS.
ONE
MORE
PICTURE
...

FWSH

PLSHH

SPLSH

PLASH

?!

PLSH PLSH PLSH

EEEEEEE!

PEH PEH

SPLOSH

PLIP PLIP PLIP

PSH PSH PSH PSH

SAY. BOY. YOU THERE.

WHO GAVE YOU PERMISSION TO TAKE MY PHOTO?

NN...

NGAH.

WHICH PUBLISHER SENT YOU?

SAY. HOW DID YOU KNOW I COME HERE?

I'M A PROFESSIONAL MODEL, YOU KNOW. DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TAKE UNAUTHORIZED PHOTOS OF ME?

NGAH NGAH ...

NGAH. NGAH.

WELL, LET ME TELL YOU.

HO... HO HO HO!

AAAA-
AAAAH!

SHUDDER
SHUDDER

HO
HO
HO.
YOU...

YOUR
FLESH
LOOKS
TENDER
AND
TASTY.

AAH! SO
SCARY
RUNNING
INTO HER!
SO THAT
MODEL
REALLY IS
IN TOWN.

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED
TO SOICHI.
I MEAN, I'M
FLEEING
FOR MY
LIFE HERE.

I HOPE
HE'S
OKAY.

SPLASH

SPLASH

RUMORS/END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Junji Ito made his professional manga debut in 1987 and since then has gone on to be recognized as one of the greatest contemporary artists working in the horror genre. His titles include *Tomie* and *Uzumaki*, which have been adapted into live-action films; *Gyo*, which was adapted into an animated film; and his books *Black Paradox*, *Deserter*, *Fragments of Horror*, *Frankenstein*, *Lovesickness*, *No Longer Human*, *Remina*, *Sensor*, *Shiver*, *Smashed*, *The Liminal Zone*, *Tombs*, and *Venus in the Blind Spot*, all of which are available from VIZ Media.

He is a four-time Eisner Award winner. In 2019 his collection *Frankenstein* won in the "Best Adaptation from Another Medium" category, and in 2021 he was awarded "Best Writer/Artist," while *Remina* received the award for "Best U.S. Edition of International Material (Asia)." *Lovesickness* won "Best U.S. Edition" in 2022.

SOICHI

JUNJI ITO STORY COLLECTION

Story & Art by Junji Ito

Ito Junji Kessakushu 3: Soichi no kattena noroi
© JI Inc. 2011
Originally published in Japan in 2011 by Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc., Tokyo. English translation rights arranged with Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc., Tokyo through TOHAN CORPORATION, Tokyo.

Translation & Adaptation: Jocelyne Allen
Touch-Up Art & Lettering: Eric Erbes
Cover & Graphic Design: Adam Grano
Editor: Masumi Washington

The stories, characters, and incidents mentioned in this publication are entirely fictional.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the copyright holders.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, July 2023

VIZ SIGNATURE

ratings.viz.com
RATED T+ OLDER TEEN

PARENTAL ADVISORY
SOICHI is rated T+ for Older Teen and is recommended for ages 16 and up. This volume contains graphic violence, horror, and gore.

VIZ MEDIA
viz.com